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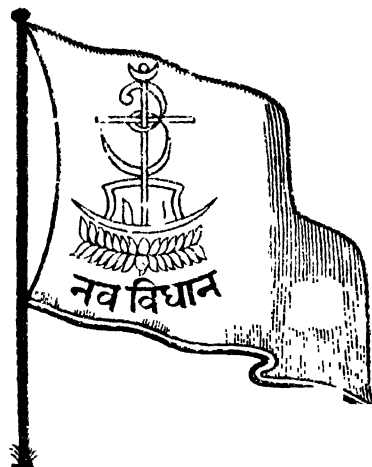






BRAHMANANDA  
KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

" Testimonies in Memoriam "



*Compiled by*  
G. C. BANERJI,  
*Retired District and Sessions Judge, Behar & Orissa.*  
*Author of :*  
" Keshab Chandra & Ram Krishna "  
AND  
" Keshab as seen by his Opponents "

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*Brahmananda*

KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

Born 19, November,  
1838.

Passed away 8, January,  
1884.

## FOREWORD

REV. Bhai Mahendra Nath Bose of the Navavidyan (New Dispensation) Church got together a large number of *Appreciations* from eminent people (Indian and non-Indian), of the life and teaching of Keshub Chunder Sen. This was printed but the whole thing was lost to us. Fortunately we have got hold of a copy which is now printed along with some other Appreciations collected by us. In this connexion we would refer the reader to B. Mazumdar's books—

“Prof. Maxmuller on Ram Krishna” and “The World on Keshub Chunder Sen”

“God-Man Keshab”

“Mahayogi Keshab and Europe.”

And our publications entitled—

“Keshab as seen by his Opponents” and

“Keshab Chandra and Ram Krishna”

(Indian Press, Allahabad)

Some Bengali speeches and articles have been added at the end of this book. The reader's attention is particularly drawn to those of Dr. P. Chatterji and Mr. B. C. Pal to be found therein.

A Bibliography has also been added to facilitate the study of the life and teaching of Keshab.

*N.B.*—On pages 1—214 of this book the Appreciations collected by the late Rev. M. N. Bose have been given. Those on pages from 215 to the end of the book have been collected by the compiler.

GYAN KUTIR,  
NEW KATRA, ALLAHABAD: }  
*March, 1934.*

G. C. BANERJI.

# KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

## APPRECIATION

OF HIM AND HIS WORK

BY EMINENT INDIANS AND EUROPEANS

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BY N. N. GHOSE, F. L. S. (LONDON), F. R. S. I.  
THE WELL-KNOWN EDUCATIONIST AND BAR-AT-LAW.

*November 17, 1903.*

MATTHEW ARNOLD said in one of his latter-day essays that when he was a young man he heard Voices in the air. Happy are they, he rightly observed, who can hear such Voices. One of the Voices which he heard, and which he congratulated himself on hearing, was Newman. The great scholar regretted that in the days when he was writing his essay, there was scarcely any such Voice, from which young men might draw their inspiration. The most attentive listener could not discover any but faint echoes of the Voices of a preceding generation. In Bengal about a generation ago if there was a Voice, it was, Keshub Chunder Sen. It may be doubted if ever among our countrymen who have received a western education there has been in Bengal another such Voice as that. There have been eminent workers in this or that sphere, men of great abilities who have served the country in some particular way, some of whom may have not only thrown out a new idea but embodied it in institutions. But scarcely any one except Keshub Chunder Sen has agitated the speculative thought of nearly all the English-speaking Bengalees. There have been many "leading men," but scarcely another such leader of thought. The

whole province was of course not led by him ; but those whom he did not lead felt nevertheless the force that was in the air. Some followed him partially ; others with minds stirred up by his teaching, argued against him, actively dissented from him. None remained quiescent ; he was not a power to be ignored. A stimulus had been given to the thought of Bengal and it was kept up by a succession of speeches which kept the waves of thought ever rolling. He was born at a time when higher English education was still a thing of small growth in this country, but there were among his contemporaries and his elders many men of remarkable abilities, great scholarship, and much distinction in their own special spheres of activity. In general intellectual power or learning, he was not certainly the greatest man of his time. He was not great in the subjects taught in the schools ; and one is not surprised that his academic career was not much of a success. But a leader of men, in particular a spiritual leader, is not required to be a great scholar, philosopher or scientist. He needs to have other qualifications ; and in these Keshub Chunder Sen was particularly rich. His mind was not weighed down by learning, nor refined into a discursive subtlety by the grinding-stone of logic or metaphysics, but it was instinct with a fire that illumined its own possessions, communicated its warmth to all it came in contact with and its light to all who were capable of receiving it. The Divine afflatus which we call genius was in him. That breath was the breath of his life. Intensity of conviction, earnestness of spirit, a burning desire to know the truth and make it prevail, made him what he was. Providence had endowed him with rare oratorical powers ; and when these were associated with a commanding personality, a pleasing, cheerful countenance, and a voice at once powerful and melodious, it seemed

as if he was the chosen instrument of the purposes he was destined to fulfil.

In his earlier teaching he was mainly critical. His speeches are pervaded with a rationalistic spirit. It was the rationalism, however, not of the unbeliever, but of the believer. He waged war against superstition and prejudice and unmeaning convention. He did not, like the shallow atheist, regard human reason, especially the reason of the individual, as the guiding light of life. But in his allegiance to the Divine Will and Reason he felt himself bound to oppose the artificialities with which man had clogged the free forces of human life and soul. His war against prejudice was inspired, not by his idolatry of the human reason, but by his reverence for the Divine Reason. It was the iconoclasm, not of Voltaire, but of Luther. There could be no doubt of his sincerity, for he practised what he preached and suffered much in social life. It must not be supposed that he spoke only on religion and on ancient social customs. His scheme of reform was wide. He spoke on social purity, on temperance, on the education of boys and of girls, on higher education, on primary education, on the duties of the British Government in the East, on the ethics of war, on the spirit which should guide Englishmen in their dealings with the people of this country. It is easy to see, from his speeches that he spoke with honesty and courage. Addressing assemblies, wholly or largely English in their composition and presided over by eminent officials, he spoke unreservedly on what he considered to be the evils of Indian administration, the conventionalities, the demoralising practices of western social life, and, if an apparent solecism will be pardoned, the barbarities of modern European civilisation. At the same time, he believed that British supremacy in India was a Divine dispensation. The

earnestness of the speaker is manifest in every line of his utterances. In England, as in India, he was ready to beard the lion in his den, and he delivered his home truths with an unsparing rhetoric. Alike in the East and the West, he was iconoclastic. He knew no flattery and was staggered by no authority. He declaimed against forms, forms that were useless, forms that were mischievous, forms that hid the reality and that misled and debased the soul. He was for peace, love and light. He pleaded for simplicity in life, sincerity in thought, worship of none but the Most High, and worship in no other way than a reverent bending of the soul.

With advancing years his mind expanded. He ceased to be purely critical and began to be constructive. The second stage of his thought may be called the stage of appreciation, of interpretation, not merely of the Hindu religion but of all religions that he knew, not merely of Hindu social and religious practices but of all social and religious practices that he knew. Keshub Chunder Sen is seen at his best, in the perfection of his glory, in the fulness of his intellectual and spiritual powers, in the latest years of his life. The fire of his youth continued not merely unabated; it had been sublimed. It was all light, no heat. In his own life he had passed from the hero's strife to the saint's rest. And he was prepared to teach the world, not only how to battle with wrong, but how to attain peace. He offered to the world an appreciation of the religion of Jesus as taught and practised by Jesus himself; an appreciation of Hinduism as taught and practised by the ancient Hindu saints and seers; of Islam as it is in itself and as it was intended to be; of Buddhism as it is in itself and as it was intended to be. By observation and reflection, he discovered the virtue of Yoga and came to understand the Yogi. The for-

mulæ of Vedic worship and Vedantic Philosophy revealed their meaning to his ripened mind. By inner experience he came to realise the possibility and the value of inspiration ; and he was able to read in a new light the life and teachings of the great religious teachers of the world. The conflict or even the diversity of religions appeared to his instructed vision as a delusion. All Religions, he saw, were one, even as God Himself was one. The paths were different, but the goal was the same. Those that called any one path, the only path, were under an error proceeding from ignorance. It might be an honest error, but an error all the same. He thus came to his idea of the Harmony of Religions, of the Religion of the New Dispensation, most fiercely attacked by those who know it least. But Keshub Chunder Sen, though he saw the errors of bigots and zealots, was ready to excuse them for he had seen their origin and explanation. He saw a meaning in Forms and Ceremonies. He had found a key to the history of Religions and was prepared to be tolerant to all, but was himself not liable to be ensnared in the meshes of any sect which believes in nothing but its own label. What a pity he passed away in the fulness of his powers before he had done more to spread the new light ! But, as he himself was wont to say, " Thy will be done."

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## WHAT THE BRAHMO SAMAJ OWES TO KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

BY R. G. BHANDARKAR.

I HAD not the good fortune of being closely acquainted with the late Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, but, as intimately connected with the great religious movement which was under his guidance for a long time, I feel myself in a position to form some judgment of what the movement owes to him. Before he joined the Brahmo Samaj it was little known outside of Calcutta. His great aim appears to have been to make Brahmoism the religion of the whole country, and early in his career he travelled over different parts of India preaching his doctrines. In the year 1864, he came to Poona, and I remember of having a conversation with him in the Native General Library in the old Budhwar-palace which was the rendezvous of the educated people of Poona in those days. Some of us, not satisfied with the prevalent religion, were in quest of a new one, but we did not feel sure that the Brahmo religion, of which, however, we had not heard much, would satisfy the religious needs of the human soul. And my question to Keshub Babu referred to the grounds for his belief that such an abstract religion would satisfy the masses. I do not quite remember his reply, but I can say this of it that it was by no means unsatisfactory. In 1870, Babu Protap Chunder Majumdar, Gour Govind Roy and Amritlal Bose came to Bombay on their way to Mangalore and they first delivered some stirring addresses. Subsequently in 1872, Protap Babu lived with us in Bombay for about six months and succeeded in influencing the minds of some of us and in organising our

Prarthana Samaj generally. In this manner the missionaries trained by Keshub Babu to carry out his idea of the propagation of Brahmoism worked zealously under his direction and guidance. And the very name, Brahmo Samaj of India, that Keshub Babu gave to the congregation of his followers after he had seceded from the old institution, shows that the Brahmo Samaj had emancipated itself from its narrow provincial traditions.

A doctrinal reform in the creed of the Brahmo Samaj must also, I believe, be traced to Keshub Chunder Sen. The Rishis of the *Upanishads* living a retired life in forests with the Heaven above and the earth below, worshipped and contemplated God enthroned in the Universe. He was the source of everything, was present everywhere, and was the Soul of all. The universe testified to His might and glory, which, however, defied man's powers of comprehension. He was the Ruler of all, the Lord of all, the Protector of all. Order was His law and He prevented things from running into chaos. In the beauty of the Universe they saw His ineffable joy and those who actually found Him everywhere by the force of contemplation became partakers in His joy. And what were the joys of a family life as compared with this joy! "The wise men of old, therefore, abandoned their desire for a family life and a social life and maintained themselves by begging from door to door." But the religious consciousness of a man living in the world and exposed to the trials and temptations of the world involves another element, and that has been supplied by the *Bhakti* School of Indian religious thought. To the *Bhakta*, or devotee, God is father and mother. Not that He is not as the *Upanishads* represent him, but, Great and Mighty as He is, He is our loving Mother. In one of his songs, Tukaram involuntarily gives expression

to his full religious consciousness by combining the two elements:—"Incomprehensible is Thy glory, even the *Vedas* have been struck dumb, the mind with its windlike speed is crippled. Vain are the efforts of my intellect to grasp One with whose splendour it is that the sun and the moon are splendid. How ridiculous is the idea of my setting Thee forth when he with a thousand mouths failed to do so ! Says Tuka, O God ! we are thy children, Thou our loving Mother, give us shelter under the shade of Thy love."

Before Keshub Babu's active work began, the God worshipped by the Brahmo Samaj was the *Upānishad* God. Texts from the *Upānishads* were usually taken for sermons and the terminology or literature of the *Bhakti* School does not seem to have been used. The texts descriptive of the nature of God occurring in the book published under the name of "Brahmo-Dharma" are from the *Upānishads*. Keshub brought in the words *Bhakti* (love) and *Yoga* based on *Bhakti* (union through love) and preached the Motherhood of God. He gave prominence to some of the ideas of the *Bhakti* system, though he too does not seem to have drawn largely from the literature of the School, Sanskrit or Vernacular.

Keshub Babu lived and has gone. The wheel of Law (*Dharmachakra*), in Bhuddhistic phraseology, which he set going has become clogged and even broken into four or five pieces. All efforts to repair it by joining the pieces have failed, and the prospects of the spread of Brahmoism, so far as this section at least is concerned, have become gloomy. Brahmoism is the one religion that will facilitate the work of the regeneration of India, but no religion however good or true, can spread unless its votaries learn humility, find out by a rigid self-examination how the self overmasters them and surrender it entirely to

God, love God and God alone, depend upon Him and Him alone, and make strenuous endeavours to spread the truth at the sacrifice, not only of their comforts and worldly position or reputation, which they ought to consider as mere trash, but of their life itself. Buddhism and Christianity spread because they had a number of such followers and Brahmoism can spread under no other conditions. Lastly, let me warn my reader that in speaking thus I speak impersonally, but if personal application is necessary in order that action may follow, my words are applicable as much to me as to anybody else.

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## AN AFFECTIONATE ESTIMATE.

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BY KALI CHARAN BANERJI.

*November 20, 1903.*

In response to your request, I have great pleasure in furnishing you with my estimate of my beloved brother, Keshub Chunder Sen. Pressed for time as I am, however, I must content myself with formulating his services in a few brief sentences.

1. At a time when most of our educated young men were in danger of drifting into scepticism, he was the means of an awakening among them, which enlisted large numbers on the side of religion.
2. The revival of religion among the educated took, at starting, an intellectual turn. It was he that imparted to it a devotional character.
3. He gave a practical impetus to the study of Comparative Religion in our Province and helped.

to bring about an intelligent attitude towards creeds other than one's own.

4. To him must be assigned the honour of having popularised Christ in Bengal. The universal regard for Christ and His religion is an outstanding fruit of his fervid appeals.

5. By precept and example, he commended to our people the doctrine of communion with brethren of other creeds.

6. He was the originator of a peculiarly simple style of Bengali in religious exercises, addresses, and writings.

I need hardly refer to his charming personality, his genius for organisation, his originality for spiritual thought, his magnetic eloquence, his child-like simplicity, and his exemplary life.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN AS A SOCIAL REFORMER.

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BY HERBERT ANDERSON.

No sympathetic student of the History of India's Social and Religious welfare can overlook, or ever forget the strenuous part played therein by sweet-souled Keshub. Few and far between are great men such as he. Generations of India's unnumbered millions come and go—Her social Reformers stand out in sublime isolation, like mighty comets-long-orbited shedding their glorious lustre for a passing hour. A Ram Mohun Roy, an Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar, a Mr. Justice Ranade, has made for himself a niche of immortality in the history of

the 19th Century. No less did Keshub Chunder Sen, Reformer and Patriot, Orator, Ascetic and Saint.

It was early in his public life that he beheld in his beloved country the sad form, as it were, of a white robed widow, whose sorrow had been petrified by the customs of a hoary past, whose hopes blighted by man-made institutions, whose liberties were manacled, and whose future was a weavy foreboding of mysterious ill. And with Keshub, sympathy was ever practical, it clothed itself forthwith in glowing word, and forceful deed. He must speak, and he must act—and speak and act he did. India's hope lay in the regeneration of her national ideas, in the reformation of her national life, in her emancipation from the thralldom of a degenerate past. He would do his part whatever the cost might be—So one beholds in him a many-sided character, the advocate of educational progress, the defender of civil and religious liberty, the apostle of temperance and purity reform, the widow's champion, and the woman's friend, the lover of his country's virtue, the fearless exposé of his country's vice.

Like all great Reformers Keshub was a man of dauntless courage. It is said that in his boyhood's days he ever sought to be true to himself, and when once he saw what he believed to be the path of duty he fearlessly trod it, even though friends dissuaded or foes abused. The experiences of later life more than justified this early promise of moral heroism. Harmony was his life's watchword. Discord the atmosphere in which he had to propagate it. And one cannot recall without a shade of sadness the fierce struggles, unhappy controversies, passing unpopularity, painful disagreements, and the cruel misrepresentations that fell to his lot. Truly he learned :—

" How sublime a thing it is  
To suffer and be strong "

Like some bold promontory that stands out far seaward, bearing the burnt of a thousand storms, strong with a calm enduring strength—so did Keshub Babu face his enemies and withstand them all. Opposition nerved him to more strenuous efforts, unpopularity disciplined his soul, defeat gave visions of higher ideals, and aspirations after more sublime attainments.

" His life was gentle ; yet the elements  
So mixed in him, that nature might stand up  
And say to all the world. " This was a man."

Recent events in Bengal seem to foreshadow coming changes. A spirit of hero worship is in the air and men say " Give us Heroes of our own kith and kin." Alas—India has eyes to see—but she sees not. It is not heroes of the past India needs—but heroism in the present,—and if the Apostle of the New Dispensation could send a message such as used to thrill men's hearts in days gone by ; would he not say—" Men & Fathers, some thing, some *little* thing has been accomplished for which I lived, suffered and died ; but oh ! how much there is yet to do. Weary not in this great struggle for the Right—The forces that be against progress are overwhelming, but lost is the battle they fight. Liberty, justice, purity, truth, in hearth and home, in city and empire—make these thy life's ambition. Struggle, endure, yea die if need be but win them for thyself—thy country—and thy God."

The memory of Keshub Chunder Sen is still green, and many eyes will be moist to-day, as thought sadly wanders back across the vista of the years since, all too soon, as men might say, he passed into the Unseen. To know him was to love him ; to have but a casual acquaintance was to honor

and respect him; and to those who must go to the printed page to learn his worth, his personality fascinates, his life's keen sorrows touch the heart, his brave words and braver deeds in the realm of social reform command attention and invite imitation. May it be ours to follow where he led, and seeking not the approbation of men but daily striving to obey the will of God, may we be worthy of an epitaph that might well have been his.

"He had kept the whiteness of his soul  
And so men o'er him wept"

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## "ONWARD, FORWARD AND HEAVENWARD."

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BY AEJREKUM NARAHCIAR.

IN the words of the Sage of Concord, "Mankind have, in all ages, attached themselves to a few persons, who, either by the quality of that idea they embodied or by the largeness of their reception, were entitled to the position of leaders and law-givers. . . These men correct the delirium of the animal spirits, make us considerate, and engage us to new aims and powers. . . What indemnification is one great man for populations of pigmies?" Kesnub Chunder Sen,—the Heaven-ordained teacher and preacher, whose silvery voice rang from one end of the country to the other—nay it reached the furthest limits of the earth, for when he spoke the sweet and melodious words of truth and wisdom, the whole world listened,—was, indeed, a great man. He fully answered the above description, and what is more, he had not only a message to deliver, but, a



life to live, and within the small compass of two fleshy arms he embraced the whole world in love and fraternal fellowship. The rare sight of of a religious leader without a modicum of *odium theologicum* the world witnessed in Keshub Chunder Sen. Our Father's house that hath many mansions, hath certainly many entrances too, and this fact Keshub sought to emphasize in his New Dispensation which is not only a sound but grand idea of synthetic unity in the religious thought of of the Nineteenth Century in which he lived and worked.

In Keshub's own words, "Great men appear when they are needed," and "certainly no great man ever rose in the world, but his birth was necessitated by surrounding circumstances, and his life was a necessary response to the demands of the age." Keshub's advent, too, in the world's drama, was just at the nick of the time. English education, imparted in our schools and colleges, had undermined the faith of the educated classes of our people in the popular religion and delivered them from the galling yoke of the Brahminical priesthood, and the thousand and one injurious institutions and customs which for centuries had paralysed all their nobler sentiments and energies. The light of the Western sciences had, indeed, well nigh succeeded in dispelling the darkness of ignorance and superstition. But curiously enough while it accomplished all this, it failed to inspire the youth of those days with any positive faith, on the contrary, it tended to land them in the realm of disbelief and scepticism. In doubting the popular Hinduism of the day, the recipients of the college education in those days, brought themselves to doubt and eschew religion altogether. In flinging away the shackles of corrupt doctrines, they would not shrink from going beyond the holy bounds of morality. The excesses of the early band of our

English educated countrymen are a matter of history. They filled the hearts of the patriarchs and pater-families of those times with serious apprehensions of social disorder and disorganisation while they encouraged the college-bred youth to go on quite unchecked in their career of social somersaults of a revolting, and not unoften, of an amusing character. The work of destruction seemed to be very near complete. The work of reconstruction was with them yet a remote idea. Western science and literature had emancipated their minds from the thralldom of superstition, but they could not succeed in implanting into their minds any positive belief, any positive creed, which may be said to be the main stay of man's character and career under all conditions of life. They were, as it were, put into the cabin of a ship in the midst of a vast, boundless main, without provision, without compass or rudder. The position was, indeed, perilous.

It was Keshub Chunder Sen who first noticed this perilous position of his educated countrymen and he drew their attention to it in unerring words of warning. "There are two things," said Muhammad, "which I abhor, the learned in his infidelities, and the fool in his devotions." "Our times," says he of Concord, "are impatient of both, and specially of the last." In his "Appeals to Young India," Keshub, while congratulating them on their deliverance from idolatry which was the root of all the evils which afflicted Hindu society, that which constitutes the chief cause of degradation," exhorted them, in no uncertain language, to rise from the lake of disbeliefs and despondency and do their duty as men, to God and man. "For the sake of your souls and for the sake of the souls of the millions of your countrymen, . . . acknowledge the One Supreme and True God, our Maker, Preserver, and Moral Governor,

not in belief only, but in every-day concerns and avocations of your life. By offering such uncompromising allegiance to Him and dedicating yourselves wholly to His service, you will rescue your own consciences from corruption and sin, and your country from superstition, priest-craft, absurd rites, injurious practices and horrid customs and usages." It need hardly be said that his impassioned appeal had not fallen into quite deaf ears. If judged by the subsequent results, it may not be said with any amount of certainty, that it was crowned with an unqualified success. But whether the number of his immediate adherents increased or not, these burning words had their effect on those whom they were addressed to, for they awakened and engendered in his countrymen a spirit of inquiry, and it is certainly, not too much to say that the spirit of modern revival of religion which is observed to pervade in this Provinces in whatever form and shape, owes not a little for its incentive to the initiative of Keshub Chunder Sen.

He was, by common consent, an all-round reformer. His sweet and melodious and withal weighty utterances on all conceivable subjects of reform affecting the best interest of his country and countrymen, are still, as it were, dinning into our ears ! He spoke on sociology, ethics, politics and economics, but his main theme was Religion, from which, if rightly conceived, would proceed, he answered every other kind of reform. Without religion, he said, there was no regeneration, social or political. He condemned caste, because "it is an audacious and sacrilegious violation of God's law of human brotherhood." He was an ardent social reformer, but he never advocated social reform on the ground of expediency. His heart bled at the sight of wrongs and injuries inflicted on men and women on all sides

not because of any inherent fault in the sufferers, but because of an unbending and unjust set of social laws and customs which had their origin in the selfishness of unfeeling men who took pleasure, and thought it profitable perhaps, in formulating such obnoxious laws and customs. But he knew that in this country, where religion and society are interwoven with each other, to attempt at social reformation without reforming the religion would be to work without aims. The Hindus, we know, are exceedingly a religious people. They walk and sit religiously, work and sleep religiously; and every social custom obtaining in India, had for its basis the dictates, rightly or wrongly, of the national religion. It, therefore, there is a need for reform of their social organisation, it pre-supposes that there is a need for the reform of the religion, in which there is a screw loose somewhere inasmuch as it gave tacit sanction to such social laws and customs as were eating into the very vitals of the Hindu society.

Carlyle rightly observes when he says, that "a man's religion is the chief fact with regard to him. A man's or a nation of men's." By religion, the Philosopher of Chelsea does not, avowedly, mean here "the church-creed which he professes" but "the thing a man does particularly believe; the thing a man does practically lay to heart, and I know for certain, concerning his vital relations to this mysterious Universe, and his duty and destiny there, that is in all cases the primary thing for him, and creatively determines all the rest. That is his *religion*." Religion, Emerson says, is the flowering and completion of man's culture. He is not dismayed at the decline or fall of successive religions, for "God builds his temple in the heart on the ruins of churches and religions." Keshub was the votary of such religion,

a religion of heart, not of mere profession, a religion of action, not of mere assertion. He was, therefore, decidedly of opinion that religious reform was indispensable to social reform worth the name, both as a foundation and as a consummation; and he said: "If you wish to reform the social organisation of India, you must, in the first instance, give her true religion, or else your attempts will be ineffectual." "Give her life,—give her capacity to think about her spiritual interests—and then you will find social reformation spontaneously—in the natural course of things—come about in the fulness of time." Addressing a public meeting at the Town Hall of Bombay, some thirty years ago, when most of the social reformers of to-day whose names are most incessantly noised about and abroad, must have been still in their cradles, he said: . . . "Then you will, perhaps, ask me, what is my programme of social reform? I would say all the social reforms I would propose for your consideration are involved in this grand radical reformation,—religious reformation. You will not be required to convene public meetings for the purpose of carrying out this reformation. No. For then, through faith the sense of duty of each individual will have been awakened to his work,—to the urgency and momentousness of attending practically to the social interests of India. Questions of social reform will not then appear to you as matters of worldly expediency, but as questions of vital importance, and will come upon you with all the weight of moral obligation. To believe in the Fatherhood of God is to believe in the Brotherhood of man; and whoever, therefore, in his own heart and in his own home worships the True God daily, must learn to recognise all his fellow-countrymen as brethren. Caste would vanish in such a state of society; in such enthusiastic religious state of fellow-

ship, caste would die of itself " in a similar strain and vein. And *he spoke on every kind of reform which is now the burden of discussion and subject of controversy* throughout the length and breadth of the country. No wonder, therefore, that his immediate followers, the progressive school of Brahmos, should be, among his countrymen, the most consistent and thorough paced social reformers; for the reforms they advocate and those they have adopted, are based upon no earthly expediency, but upon the solid rock of religious conviction.

Keshub Chunder Sen was a man of intense faith and everything he did or said was inspired by his love of God and his sense of duties to man. His career and character as a great reformer offer an inexhaustible theme for us to dwell upon, but considerations of space curb our desire, specially as others, some of our eminent leaders and men of letters, far more competent than ourselves to make a proper estimate of the work and worth of the great Brahmo leader, have kindly come forward to do us the honour to adorn the pages of this Birthday Number of *the Unity and Minister* with their valuable contributions. Sufficient however to say, that in these degenerate days, Keshub Chunder Sen *has lighted the torch of faith and knowledge* which has shown us that our march must henceforth be onward and upward both as individuals and members of society. It will require untiring effort and unswerving perseverance to keep pace with the age. The aspirations of some do not extend beyond their passions and prejudices and ending there, unhappiness and misery to themselves and others follow. However, as we look forward to the future, we see shadows thrown across our way which seem to indicate that beyond, in the vast depths of time, are better and brighter days, when men shall use their powers aright, and

successfully make their efforts conducive to their own improvement and the good of others. We, too can do much, if we will but resolutely exert ourselves towards removing the dark veil which overshadows the future ; and we can assist in clearing away the ignorance and superstition retarding the full development of the capabilities of our once great and noble, but now unhappily fallen race, and causing misery and wretchedness all round. As we aspire more and more towards perfection, so shall we become more happy and more useful. Should we not aspire to do our duty then ? And what can be more satisfactory to reflect upon than duty manfully, earnestly, and faithfully done ? Without this satisfaction, how insipid are all other things—and with it, how content and happy do we feel, though adverse circumstances encompass us ? But what is this duty, to the performance of which we should so earnestly aspire ? It is following the dictates of truth, justice and reason ; and doing all the good we can do for others. Easily may our duty be discerned, if we strifle not the promptings of our consciences which point out what is required of us. Our influence, though it may be small at present, will perchance extend even as the circle in the lake is ever extending till it reaches the furthest bound ; and each one, whether as a unit of society or individually, by imparting the knowledge he has acquired and by doing all the good he can in other ways, may assist in widening the field of human progress and human happiness. Let us then proceed "*onward forward, and Heavenward,*" in the encouraging words of Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen.

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## BABU KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

ROOT-IDEA OF HIS LIFE WORK,

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 BY THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE N. G.  
 CHANDAVARKAR B.A., LL B.
*November 20, 1904.*

It is nearly a quarter of a century since I saw and heard the late Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, and the impression which his utterances then made upon my mind lasts as if I had heard the great orator but a few days ago. He had then returned from England to Bombay and was on his way back to Calcutta; and the Bombay Prarthana Samaj invited him to give to the local public his English experiences before leaving for his city. I have heard several orators since then, both in this country and in England; but Babu Keshub Chunder Sen's oratory stands distinguished in my memory by the fact that it was the oratory of a God-inspired man. Choice and chaste as the English of his eloquence was, it was not the beauty of his language so much as the beauty of his soul, which giving a peculiar lustre to his face and expression as he spoke, touched the hearts of his hearers and held them spell-bound. One felt oneself in his presence as in the presence of a great character, and who moved the deep spiritual forces within, and the heart was barren that did not feel, when moved by Babu Keshub Chunder Sen's words, that there is God within us, that His Spirit resides in us and that the soul of man is divine.

It is as a God-inspired man that Babu Keshub Chunder Sen deserves to live immortal in the hearts of his countrymen. His lectures and sermons, deli-



vered from time to time, are in themselves an education. They appeal no doubt more to the heart than to the head and to dry intellectualists they may seem to contain very little of learning and logic. But great men, whose mission is to move mankind and stir the God within Man, are great because they more than others, realise that Life is Love and that Love is God and realising that they deem it their duty to improve the heart of man, which becomes the source of all good, when it is properly roused, and becomes the source of all evil, when it is neglected. The story is told of Ruskin that so long as he reasoned about Art, very few heeded him, and he hardly exercised any influence as a great Teacher. Just the moment he began to lay down his laws by appealing to the hearts of men and by idealising art with the help of nobler feelings of humanity, the civilised world commenced to see that here was a Teacher who must be heard and respected. Great movements which make nations great, are not the product of mere intellectual force. Men are not led to great actions by mere logic. That is the work of great ideals, and great ideals are produced only then when men are made to realise that there is a soul within them which partakes of the Divine.

From this point of view we stand under an everlasting obligation to Babu Keshub Chunder Sen for the greatness and usefulness of his lifework. It was, comparatively speaking, a short life; but within the short span of, say, twenty years, he did what only a Great Man could do to sow the seed of Life in the hearts of his countrymen by his simple devotion to the cause of religion. To the Theistic Church in India, founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and fostered by the deep and abiding piety of Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore—whom, God be praised, we

have still among us as a unique example of godliness—Babu Keshub Chunder Sen gave a position and a name. He furnished the movement with active life by becoming in his time 'the head and centre of the zealous people in every part of the country who were adopting the new opinions'; he gave it a "name, a form, and a personality." It is now a truism to say the motto of the Brahmo Samaj is "The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man." That motto is the Rock, so to say, upon which the Brahmo Samaj is founded; it was the truth on which Raja Ram Mohan Roy based all his teachings. Babu Keshub Chunder Sen carried forward the work where the great Raja had left it and gave the truth a concrete shape which no one could mistake. Reformation in religion must be thorough, otherwise it is no reformation at all. There is no such thing as a religion for private life and religion for public life. Religion has only one meaning—it must touch the heart and influence the whole of our life. Where a man's religion has not fulfilled this function—where it has not made him a man of faith, hope, and charity all round, living a life of holiness and love at home, in society, in the country at large, in the eyes of his families, in the eyes of his countrymen, it is no religion at all. To be religious you must live as in 'the Great Task Master's eyes'. In other words, the Principle of the 'Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man' must so permeate the mind and the heart that it should, as it were, become the well of life for each of us and then it is that religion has revealed itself in us. This, in my opinion, is the root idea of Babu Keshub Chunder Sen's teaching—the rich legacy of thought that he has left for us by his precept, his example, and his lifework. That was and is his message to his countrymen.

It was no new message. Saints and prophets of old, whose names, lives, and teachings are household words with us in this country, had brought the same message and made it the mission of their lives. True Religion, which consists in the realisation of the faith that comes of "the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man" is as ancient as the world itself. No prophet or saint has ever put forward for himself the claim of originality. When Carlyle brought to the last century his message that "the first duty of every teacher is to dig through the superincumbent rubbish of tradition which ages have deposited and to reach the bed rock of truth," he was only preaching what, for instance, the Maharatti saint Tukaram had preached to his fellowmen before that. The value of such lives as that of Babu Keshub Chunder Sen is that they teach us how true it is that 'no man becomes honest till he has got face to face with God.'

Family, country, nationality, humanity may seem to exist without the presence of God in our idea of them; but where God is not there these are all lifeless. Without the life of godliness crowning each of these, they are mere empty shows. Once realise what it is to get "face to face with God"—once realise what it is to believe unflinchingly and abide by the faith that God is our Father and we are all His children, what a new world full of life and vigour, of immortal hopes and aspirations, is created *within* and *without* us! Then, and then only, all noble exertion for the good of others, *for the public good* (as the phrase now goes) becomes inspiring, and difficulties, disappointment, failures, so far from depressing energy and killing higher thought and further exertion only serve to heighten all noble endeavour. Failures under such a faith become to

the believing soul only the prophecies of success. Hence was it that Babu Keshub Chunder Sen both by precept and example laid such great stress on the value of "prayer" and "meditation". We must get "face to face with God" if we wish for regeneration whether that regeneration be *individual, social or national*, and we can get face to face with Him if we learn to *pray* *He works who prays*. It is a great thing to know when to pray and how to pray. *Prayer* is the source and secret of all true life. Pray to God as a child—surrender yourself to Him, confide to Him all your thoughts and actions. Seek Him in the moments when you are alone—and so sought, He becomes your life. This is the second legacy of teaching, Babu Keshub Chunder Sen has left for us and I count it as the most precious of the heritage we have derived from his life.

But is there no other? There are other lessons to be derived from his life, for it was a life of godliness. But to me these two which I have set forth form the root idea of the life of this child of God, Babu Keshub Chunder Sen. Other remarkable traits of his character are merely emanations of these two. I have heard those who knew him intimately say that he had "a woman's heart"—so simple, loving and patient he was. He had, I have been told, remarkably patience—he bore and he preserved—never disappointed if the harvest did not come at once; never angry because the hour was dark and profitless. But these and many other qualities of his angelic disposition are so many lights of the life whose mission was to get and teach other how to get face to face with God." He was a *Bhakta* and in that sense he was a truly inspired Prophet. He was "the faith and patience of the saints"—and what a glory should be ours if cherishing his sacred memory we tried to make what was *his* also *ours*!

## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

BY N. N. GHOSE, ESQ., BAR-AT-LAW, F.L.S., LONDON.

IN article which I contributed last year to this paper I said : " Keshub Chunder Sen is seen at his best, in the perfection of his glory, in the fulness of his intellectual and spiritual powers, in the latest years of his life . . . . By observation and reflection he discovered the virtue of *yoga* and came to understand the *yogi*. The formulæ of *Vedic* worship and *Vedantic* Philosophy revealed their meaning to his ripened mind. By inner experience he came to realise the possibility and the value of inspiration ; and he was able to read in a new light and life and teachings of the great religious teachers of the world. The conflict or even the diversity of religions appeared to his instructed vision as a delusion. All Religions he saw were one, even as God Himself was one. The paths were different, but the goal was the same. . . . He saw a meaning in Forms and Ceremonies." In the same article I expressed the regret that Keshub Chunder Sen passed away in the fulness of his powers before he had done more to spread the new light.

It is unfortunate not only that Keshub Chunder Sen passed away before he had done more to spread the new light, but that the light itself was mistaken for a will o' the wisp by so many of his followers, who in consequence, repudiated his leadership and seceded from his party. No one was better fitted to proclaim the new gospel, to interpret and vindicate it to the classes that had come under the rationalistic influences of English education. Ramkrishna Paramhansa has already been inculcating it

by parables and in an easy conversational way to a miscellaneous group that was attracted to him. A little later, Pundit Bijaya Krishna Goswami, once a disciple of Keshub Chunder, was communicating similar truths to men, mostly Hindus, to whom his personality was a fascination. Several English-educated men came under the influence of these teachers and were profoundly affected by it, but neither of them commanded the respect of the educated classes generally to anything like the extent that Keshub Chunder Sen did. For did they know so well as Keshub Chunder how to reach the mind or the heart of those classes? His disciples had not his plasticity or openness of mind, and when he proclaimed his ideas subsequently known as the New Dispensation, several of them mistook their own narrowness for superior wisdom and consistency and regarded him as one misguided, suffering from an aberration or a weakening of the brain. They went further. When he spoke of being the recipient of *adesha* or Inspiration, they looked upon him very much in the same light in which so many English writers have regarded Mahomet, either as a maniac, subject to delusions or as a positive, pretentious impostor. His catholicity in religion, his idea of the Harmony of Religions, they regarded as a compromise with error. They held themselves to be the sole possessors of truth and they could not permit their leader to dally with other system of faith or to recognise in them any substratum of truth. The new revelation of which he claimed to be a possessor, was in their judgment, only an instance of a relapse, a back-sliding. Keshub Chunder Sen lived to discover that his older teaching, if it had bred some sort of a faith, had bred more of scepticism and self-sufficiency. He was unable to slay the Frankenstein he had raised. He was overthrown.

It takes time for a creed to spread. It can only be regretted that Keshub Chunder did not live long enough to spread the new creed—a creed new to him and his party but by no means new in this country. As I have said already, nobody could have done it more effectively among the classes known as “Young Bengal.” Those, however, who had willingly sat at his feet to imbibe lessons in criticism and pick holes in the logical garments of the traditional religions, rebelled against him when he announced the conquests he had made in the field of spiritual truth by the newly opened spiritual eye. The blind cannot always implicitly believe in the seer. Keshub as a seer could not be trusted by all of those who had so long cheerfully accepted his metaphysics, his logic, his iconoclasm. No wonder. Men who have never realised God may be forgiven if they take anybody to be a charlatan who professes to have realised Him. *Adesha* or Inspiration must appear as a morbid fantasy to one to whom God is only an hypothesis, a possibility, an inference, a latent force, a suggestion of the order of nature, an unknown and unknowable something. To one who had realised God as a near and friendly Personality, as an ever present guide and companion who listens and speaks, Inspiration is real as life. There is abundant evidence that it is no hallucination. Whether it comes from without or is the voice of the indwelling Divine soul rendered articulate, there it is:—a fact that is undeniable, a fact that is confirmed by circumstances and verified by results, a fact that no psychic law can explain. It comes only to the pure, tranquil, devout mind. It is a direct proof of the existence of God and of His relations with man, offered not to convince the sceptic but to heal and guide the faithful, pious and reverent soul. It comes not to the man proud of his intellect or purse, but to the humble, un-

sophisticated soul, to the guileless shepherds, the simple fisherman, the humble carpenter, the untutored village maiden, to the man in deep distress who losing all trust in himself and abandoning all hope of help from man, looks upward for relief. It comes in different ways to different men, asleep or awake; comes sometimes as a message for a great purpose, sometimes as a guidance in a trivial matter of individual life. Blessed are they who can receive it. Every one who says he has received it is not an impostor, nor the victim of a delusion. When Keshub Chunder Sen received his inspirations he had spiritually progressed, not declined.

And it is the lot of any one, asleep or awake, to be confronted with any visible manifestation of the Deity; if to use a metaphor of Ram Krishna Paramhansa's the piety of the devotee freezes any fragment of the Divine spirit so as to make it patent in some form to him, his soul must go down in homage before it. That form, in spite of all theoretical difficulties, comes to the pre-eminently associated in his mind with the Divine, and to be regarded by him as the symbol and expression of Divinity. The worship of any form may be denounced as idolatrous, but the fortunate individual who has witnessed what may be called a phenomenal manifestation of God, cannot but do it worship. His own experiences confirm him in the conviction that he is pursuing no phantom, for he finds his prayers listened to, his question answered, his wounds healed. Illusions never render that service. According to a man's deserts are his rewards. As he sows, so he reaps. He who practices self-knowledge and by laborious methods at last attains *jnana*, discovers God in himself not in any phenomenal aspect but as an abstract verity. He discovers Him by realising his unity with Him. Deep self-absorption



resulting in a beatific trance is the method for this kind of realisation. The *jñani* may dispense with worship, with form and ceremony, even with prayer. And he alone has the right to do so; none else has. The *jñani* is one who has *realised* God by *Yoga*, and not merely one who says, or believes as a philosophical doctrine, that all is *brahma* and *brahma* is all. The *jñana-yogi* alone has the right to rise superior to form, ceremony and worship; not the mere theoretical vedantist or theist. The man who seeks God through love or reverence and utter self-surrender, and is happy enough to find Him by that means, comes to regard Him not as one with himself but as different and superior, claiming his homage. To the man of love and piety God reveals himself in a formal way. The manifested form, as already observed, commands worship from which form and ceremony are inseparable. The efficacy of *mantras* and forms is proved not so much by abstract reasoning as by experience. The world has room enough for both the *jñani* and the *bhakta*, for the mystic and the formal worshipper, for a Sankaracharya and a Chaitanya. Their methods are different, though their end is the same, the realisation of God. Neither has the right to claim a monopoly of truth nor even to find fault with the methods of the other. Keshub Chunder Sen in his maturest days had come to appreciate both these methods and the unity of their purpose. But when he announced this recognition he was himself not appreciated by those who were tied down to the formula of Formless Brahma and who would neither admit the possibility of a Divine Manifestation commanding worship, nor recognise the futility of dispensing with formal worship before *brahma* had been realised by *yoga*. Keshub Chunder Sen passed away shortly after he had himself seen the light and before he had made as many others see

it as he had power to influence if time was spared to him. The article, like the last year's, I can only close with an expression of regret that not only were his latest ideas not as widely received as they should have been, but that they were held as a proof of spiritual deterioration. But God works His will in many ways and the neglected truth that Keshub Chunder Sen bequeathed to his countrymen has since been disseminated through other instruments and is destined to spread far and wide.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN—AN APPRECIATION.

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BY J. N. FARQUHAR, M. A., Y. M. C. A.

THIS is not an attempt to sum up the character and genius of Keshub Chunder Sen nor yet to measure him by the absolute standard of righteousness and truth, but merely an attempt to realize the value of the work he did for India, and to pay a tribute of honour to his memory. Taken all in all, he was probably the most potent Indian of the nineteenth century. He was a man of great original force, of contagious enthusiasm and of marvellous personal influence. He was a man of action rather than a man of thought, and won his way rather by the might of his will and the force of his character than by intellectual strength. He had the ambition and the magnetic attraction of the natural leader and also the practical tact and political prudence of the organizer. Yet the centre and source of all his power lay in his religion.

He did his best work as a preacher of Theism. It would be utterly impossible to measure the influence he has exerted on India as a whole in this regard. Ram Mohun Roy was the originator of the movement; but it was Keshub that made it a mighty force in the minds of educated Indians. For it would be a grave mistake to suppose that the Brahmo Somaj is the only product of Keshub's preaching: It is simply truth to say that he left the impress of his faith deep on the mind of India everywhere. He gave such an impulse to the belief in the one personal God as it had not received in India for centuries. Hindus all over the land are different men to day because of his preaching.

In this connection, we may note also the service he did to India by his interpretation of Christ. What he said on this subject cannot satisfy the Christian consciousness; yet we recognize to the full the value of what he did. Ram Mohun Roy had spoken in the most emphatic way about the value of the teaching of Jesus but he had maintained a most extraordinary silence about the life and character of the Teacher Himself. Was it any wonder that this advocacy of the teaching fell upon unheeding ears? But Keshub revered Christ as he revered no other. It was the character of the Teacher that impressed him. And some those of his lectures that deal with Christ are glorified with an emotion and an eloquence that made them exceedingly effective when they are delivered and render them powerful to this day. Keshub did more than any other single man to produce in the minds of educated Indians that veneration for Christ which one hears expressed everywhere throughout the country to-day.

Keshub was also of supreme value to India as a social reformer. Society will never be reorganized by talk. Only men who are willing to make

sacrifices, to take the risk of the pioneer, to bear the obloquy that falls on the first martyr, can powerfully influence for good the social organism of which they form a part. A single act of honourable self-sacrifice is worth thousands of perfervid speeches not followed up by vigorous action. Keshub's stand against caste will probably produce more permanent effects than anything else he ever did : and perhaps the most beautiful monument that exists to his memory are the numerous Brahmo homes, whose family life has been emancipated, widened, and glorified by the principles which he taught and put into action.

Keshub's vigorous work and eloquence were, however, fruitful in a variety of other ways. He played a large part in rousing that patriotic feeling which is to day so powerful in every part of India. His lectures glow with a peculiar passion when his subject leads him to consider the future of India. Clearly his native land stirred the very finest feelings of his heart and stirred them mightily. The intellectual movement of the middle of the century felt the impact of his thought and his eloquence. Education and literature were enriched by the movements he started and guided. In many ways he proved himself a true man, built square, strong, compact, instinct with will and wearing the spiritual crown, without which our frail humanity is so far from what it ought to be.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN—AN APPRECIATION.

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BY JOGENDRA CHUNDER GHOSE, M. A., B. L.,  
TAGORE LAW PROFESSOR.

IT is now twenty years that the great preacher passed away from among us. All personal acrimony of his enemies as well as extreme partiality of his friends should have disappeared by this time and given place to an impartial appreciation of his character. But recent events have shown that that desirable result has not yet taken place. An incident of his school days has been the theme of angry disputants about his character. It is a lamentable sight. That Keshub Chunder was a boy of exceptional truthfulness and purity of conduct is an undoubted fact. Many years ago, I chanced to read a short account of his school days written by Mr. Justice Ghose when he was young. It is full of Keshub—they were great friends at School—of his truthfulness and the purity of his character. This testimony is valuable not because of the position and the character of the witness but because it comes from one of the most intimate friends of the boy Keshub. We need not pursue the subject any further. We know that Keshub learned to pray early and his enthusiastic soul was stirred to its depths by the power of prayer. In course of time he came to believe that the great and eternal God heard his prayers and guided his ways. If there is a God, He certainly hears the prayers of his children and guides their ways. Is He not the Protector of his servants? No man however is free from the taint of self and it is not unlikely that Keshub, like other prophets, sometimes might

have mistaken his own inclinations for the command of God. But true it is nevertheless that he above most of his contemporaries had the abundant grace of God and His merciful guidance for the good of an unfortunate people. He taught modern India the great lesson, that prayers are answered by the Eternal Spirit and that man should seek the Divine light in every action of his life.

Chaitanya's memorable stand against pantheism, and personal example of a palpable relationship between God and man, is the most beautiful chapter of Indian History. After centuries, came Ram Mohun Roy, whose mighty intellect shattered the false subtleties of Vedantic pantheism which had sapped the foundations of all true religion in India and brought her to the present depth of her degradation. Debendra Nath Tagore, truly called a Rishi, bore the torch of pure theism and fed it with the *Ahuti* of his spirit's devotion, till it shone with a refulgent light illuminating the dark firmament of India. In the soul of his disciple Keshub Chunder Sen, the light thus transmitted from teacher to pupil, became a devouring flame. Great he was in devotion and the infection of his example and burning eloquence, unexampled in the History of India carried all before them. Debendra Nath Tagore and Keshub Chunder Sen worked hand-in-hand for some time and made the Brahmo Somaj go forward in the path of progress. But the abrogation of caste, remarriage of widows, equal rights of men and women, like the abolition of idolatry, became the war cry of the new party led by Keshub which seceded from the Maharshi. New India responded warmly to the call of Keshub and Englishmen gave him their unsuited sympathy. His fame spread far and wide; and his marvellous eloquence made him the most commanding figure in India. I saw him speak in the Town

Hall a true King of Men. Ram Mohun Roy was, as Max Muller called him, Rex, King. But he was the intellectual King only. Keshub alone was King of the heart of New India.

Keshub Chunder, like his master Ram Mohun Roy, was steeped in Christian ideas. His ignorance of Sanskrit, as in the case of that most distinguished of Hindu lawyers, Dwarka Nath Mitter, placed him at a disadvantage in appreciating truly the ancient doctrines of Hinduism contained in the *Vedanta* and *Sankhya Yoga* and *Bhagabata*. But, all Keshub's deficiencies were made up by his great enthusiasm and devotion. No wonder that people, and probably he himself, as his enemies say, believed that he was an inspired prophet. Inspired or not, he was certainly a prophet at whose trumpet-call, the fetters fell away from the legs of the *Pariah* and the closed doors of the *Zenana* were unlocked and the widow was allowed once more to have the beautiful hair of Indian women on her shaven head. Aye truly he was a prophet who purged India of pantheism and brought true theism, the *Bhakti* of Chaitanya, once again to India. There is no prophet greater than he who taught India the Christian lesson that God is the Supreme Master and that life's one great privilege is to serve Him. Those that were with him speak with reverential awe of the effect of his eloquence and his enthusiastic devotion upon the minds of men. Men left off their parents and gave up wealth and worldly pursuits to follow him. When he spoke, he spoke like one inspired and no wonder that people worshipped him.

His own great devotion and the devotion of the band of truly pious men who gathered round him, made him, in his later years, a mystic. He tried to fuse the teachings of all past prophets in one great final message which he called the New Dispensation.

The truthful young Keshub, when he grew up to be the mystic prophet, in his anxiety to unify the lessons of all systems into one harmonious whole and conciliate divergent parties, forgot the absolute necessity of fighting with all his might falsehood whether it consisted in the claim of the Christians and Vaishnavas that either Christ and Chaitanya was God himself, or in the claim of Mahomet that he made the moon stop in her course, that he received the *Koran* from Heaven direct or in the prevailing idolatry of this country. Nevertheless, the New Dispensation is a notable attempt to prove that it is possible to reconcile all religious creeds. It has not succeeded in convincing men of other creeds, but it has certainly widened the vision of all theists.

Keshub was cut off in the prime of his life. Those that knew the Brahmo Somaj when he was living, and see it now, feel the difference that the want of Keshub has made to India. People now care more for place and wealth and honour than for the love of God or of country. Pantheism has, again, raised its head and penetrated even into the Brahmo Somaj. *Kirtan* has lost its attraction and prayer its hold upon the minds of our people.

You are gone. O King and master, and the spirit of darkness has, once again, swept over the plains of India and their breath has killed all enthusiasm all devotion, aye, all true patriotism. Come back, O mighty master, and fight them, for those that follow you, are weak and faint. Come back with the angels of God and the prophets of old whom you loved so well and roll back the lowering cloud of the dark and low spirits that have overspread the firmament of your country.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN AND HIS TEACHINGS.

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BY BHARADWAJA AEJREKUM NARAHCIAR.

FEW positions can well involve greater anomalies than that of a modern educated Hindu. Brightest light and deepest darkness, the oldest of the old world and the newest of the new meet around him and produce contrasts which would be hard to parallel in any other time or place. On the one hand he has been instructed in the discoveries of recent physical science, and views the universe in their lights as a great field of order and law, with the philosophies of our time, the systems of Kant and Hegel, of Hamilton and Mill, his subtle brain deals with an ease and readiness shared by few even of the Western peoples. Accustomed to read the English language with ease, he supplies the lack of modern Indian literature by the free use of the same books which fill libraries in the west. The pictures of European domestic and social life presented by English and American newspapers and works of fiction are almost as familiar to him as to any people in Europe and America. European moral ideas, however, widely divergent from his own, must be known to him hardly less well than to Europeans themselves. The religious systems of the West he is less obliged to recognise as a vital part of that mysterious Western energy before which the thrones and towers of his country have crumbled into dust. Thus on one side of his life, the educated Hindu basks in the fullest light of the present century.

But on the other side, by what stygian darkness is he surrounded ! His father, mother, wife perhaps

the grand-parents and uncles to whom, he pays patriarched homage—are, by profession, *idolators*, worshippers of a whole pantheon of deities, whom it would honour too much to compare with the gods and the goddesses of Olympus, or the wild comrades of Odin and of Thor.

When we remember, that it is no dull and stupid race with Boëtian brains and talk of oxen, still less a race essentially secular like the Chinese (constitutional indifference in religion, and materialist in philosophy) to whom so singular a dilemma has been presented; but on the contrary, a race whose subtlety of brain and love of metaphysical research far exceeded perhaps those of modern nations of Europe, and among whom in all ages the wildest religious devotion has been common, it becomes a matter of exceedingly interest to see what the outcome of the struggle may be. To continue for more than a generation in the midst of such outrageous contradictions of belief and life must assuredly be impossible; the question is,—How will they escape from them? In what direction are the minds of the youth of India tending? Is there any chance of the revival of old polytheism? Or will popular Hinduism be abolished and forms frankly adopted? Or lastly, will another faith indigenously attaching itself perhaps by some slender tendrils, to the great fallen tree which henceforth lies prostrate, but bearing flowers and fruit after its kind, all having natural affinity to the new “climate of opinion,” the new science and new philosophy, new ethics, new social and political life in which it has sprung?

It popular Hinduism be surely though slowly sinking; and no chance exists for its revival, is there a chance of acceptance of Christianity in India?—very small, however, seem the indications that such

a thing may be. The progress of the missionaries is at all events dilatory. At all events the result of their labours does not appear to be assuming the rank of a political event. Perhaps our people have been not a little bewildered by the seeming incongruity between the message and the messengers who have brought it—the Sermon on the Mount and the scarlet coated Evangelists who are so little wont to turn the cheek to the smiter, or give an additional province by him who would rob them of one already acquired.

For more reasons than need be cited here the Brahmo Samaj ushered into being by the mighty genius of Rammohan Roy, has during the seven or eight decades of its existence, been productive of much social and political welfare of the land of its birth; and it is destined to be despite all that has been and may be urged against it by purblind observers and interested individuals, the future national religion of India; for it eminently satisfies all the needs of head and heart of man.

Now, what part Keshub Chunder Sen played in this onward progress of Indian religions, social and political thought, involved in the Brahmo Samaj is too well known throughout the three continents of Asia, Europe, and America to need a detailed recapitulation here. But as on the occasion of the annual celebration of the birth-day of the illustrious religious leader it has become customary with us to dwell upon a few points of his noble career, character and work, we have thought it our duty to address ourselves to the readers of *Unity and the Minister* on the subject, as succinctly as we can.

Keshub joined the Brahmo Samaj in the year 1860. Before him and after the death of its illustrious founder, the Brahmo Samaj had been in existence under the leadership of that pious soul, Debendra

Nath Tagore, who is happily for us, still amidst us in flesh and blood, and who for his devout spirit and great dignity of character has been fittingly designated "Maharshi"—the great saint—by Keshub himself. Yes the Brahmo Samaj did exist before Keshub and he was not its founder. But historical truth devolves upon us the duty to aver that it was since Keshub's connection with the movement that the banner of the Brahmo Samaj succeeded in unfurling itself not only in every nook and corner of India itself but in the four quarters of the globe. While Debendra Nath's Brahmoism was national in its aspect, Keshub Chunder's Brahmoism became Universal in its character. It is well that tenants of the Brahmo Samaj under the leadership of Keshub Chunder Sen should be re-stated with a view to let the present generation of our countrymen know what they are and let them have an opportunity to judge for themselves whether this country, fallen as it is to-day, may not once more take her place among the hierarchy of nations by adopting such a simple and yet sublime faith. Summarised the teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen are :—

1. The Brahmo Samaj believes that God is, that He is a spirit, and that He is one without a second.

2. That God is a personal living God, with the infinite attributes of truth, wisdom, love, holiness, power, glory and peace.

3. That God is present in us, and with us. He directs all the functions of our body and mind according to its immutable laws. He watches over all our thoughts and actions. His spirit surrounds us, and fills us, and is the Cause of centre of all physical and mental forces.

4. That God is present in the aspects and laws of nature, and nothing that takes place, takes place without His will and power.

5. That as God's general providence superintends over the affairs of all mankind and the world at large, so His special providence presides over the circumstances and destinies of individual men, and leads them through mysterious ways from evil to good.

6. That there is a double nature in man namely his body and his spirit His body is perishable, but his soul is immortal.

7. That the immortality of the soul means eternal progress in goodness and godliness.

8. That without faith in a future existence religion is impossible.

9. That every man is responsible for his deeds and thoughts.

10. That inward as well as outward sin brings its own punishment both in this life and the life to come. The punishment of Sin is the degeneracy and anguish of mind, and sometimes bodily afflictions also which produce the anguish of mind.

11. That righteousness brings its reward of internal peace both here and hereafter.

12. That sin is the wilful violation of God's laws, material, moral and spiritual.

13. That righteousness is conscious and wilful obedience rendered unto God in the trials, occupations, and temptations of life

14. That there is neither material heaven nor a material hell ; but that heaven and hell are the states and relations of a man's being, according to the merits of his life, both here and hereafter.

15. That there is a spiritual relationship and future union of souls of heaven.

16. The Brahmo Samaj believes in the existence and divine authority of conscience, which lays down for man the dictates and prohibition of God.

17. That the foundation of all religion is laid on

the spiritual instincts of man which are imbedded in the nature of the soul.

18. That faith is the organ through which the perception of spiritual realities is possible, and prayer is the law without which spiritual progress is impossible.

19. The Brahmo Samaj believes in the harmonious mission of prophets and great religious teachers, through the lustre and power of whose teachings and examples we discern what is salvation and spiritual life.

20. The Brahmo Samaj believes Jesus **Christ** to be the chief of all prophets and teachers

21. The Brahmo Samaj believes in the harmony of all scriptures, and in the efficacy of studying the Bible and the Hindu scriptures.

22. That, according to the needs and tendencies of mankind, at different countries, the providence of God introduces, and carries out particular dispensations or phases of religion, with the object of delivering nations and individuals from sin and misery and of enlightening them with truth, holiness, and peace.

23. The Brahmo Samaj in its progressive developments in principle as well as life, constitutes such a dispensation, and it therefore calls itself New dispensation.

24. The Brahmo Samaj believes Theism to be the dispensation of the age. It will include all previous dispensations. It will harmonise with every form of scientific and philosophical truth. The forms and modes of the development of Theism will differ in different countries and communities; but its spirit will be the same everywhere. And the Brahmo Samaj fully believes that Theism will be the religion of the future.

25. The Brahmo Samaj believes in the inspiration and truth teaching power of its apostles. This

inspiration is more intense in some men and less intense in others.

26. The Brahmo Samaj believes that the gift of inspiration is natural and universal. That men have been inspired and commanded by God to do great things in the past, and men can be also inspired at the present time as well as in the future. But that men commissioned to carry out the special purposes of God are gifted with special inspiration for those purposes.

27. The Brahmo Samaj believes the position and mission of women in the Theistic Church to be very high, and unless and until men have learnt thoroughly to purify their hearts in regard to women and to honour them, Theism will not take root in this land

28. The Brahmo Samaj believes in the solemn duty of the communion of the spirit of man with the spirit of God. It does not believe in meditation, but in our immediate spiritual vision of the perfections of God. This is worship.

29. The Brahmo Samaj believes in the duty of communion with the spirits of holy men, both living and departed. This is brotherhood.

30. The Brahmo Samaj believes in the duty and utmost efficacy of prayer for spiritual and not for material benefits.

31. The Brahmo Samaj believes in the great duty of Public and joint worship.

32. The Brahmo Samaj believes that the brotherhood of men enjoins the great duty of sincerely loving and doing service to each other, material, moral and spiritual.

33. The Brahmo Samaj believes that religion includes every manner of good work and every description of social reform. But it does not believe in any work, or any reform, the spirit of which is not strictly and faithfully subordinated to religion.

34. The Brahmo Samaj believes in the harmony of different orders of religious culture such as meditation, prayer, good work, asceticism, and religious wisdom.

35. The Brahmo Samaj believes in the utmost sanctity of domestic life. It holds the fidelity of attachment and conduct between husband and wife to be one of the holiest sacraments of human life. It believes that every house-hold duty should be performed in the spirit of religion. Because it believes without religion no household can be happy or pure.

36. The Brahmo Samaj believes it to be a duty to honour the professors of all religions and only to beware of the hypocrite and evil doer.

37. The Brahmo Samaj believes in the sacred and solemn duty of propagating its own faith by missionary agencies, and converting men to its own religion.

38. The Brahmo Samaj believes in the sacred duty of preserving, and cherishing and cleansing this material body with which God has clothed man's soul so long as life remains. But it also believes in suffering, hardship and moral discipline which subdue and control the carnal instincts of human nature.

39. The Brahmo Samaj believes in the sacred and supreme duty of cultivating and encouraging the independence of thoughts, will, and convictions. Everything that tends to enslave man's nature is an evil. It also believes in the great duty of subordinating individual opinions, habits, and inclinations to the general welfare of the community and the country.

40. The Brahmo Samaj believes in the ultimate triumph of good over every form of evil, of truth over every form of falsehood, and of the true faith over every form of unbelief.



The above is, in brief, a summary of the teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen. How simple and sublime they are ! There is of course a great deal in them which may not appear as quite new. But then, we must bear in mind that there can be nothing new in the realm of Truth which is as old as the world itself. And the newness of the New Dispensation consists in that its apostle not only taught, but he lived as he taught and sought to impress upon others to live according to his teachings. His professions and practices squared with each other-

Keshub Chunder Sen was like every other truly inspired man, not a philosopher. In his utterances he appealed to the heart of man rather than to his intellect. Such inspired preachers without being philosophers themselves are, however, in the true sense creators of philosophy ; inasmuch as the discussion which their sayings and doings give rise often result in producing systems of philosophy, though by brains and hands other than their own.

Keshub's religion was all-inclusive. It was not the religion of the recluse or that of the cloister. It embraced all departments of life and thought and action. It embraced education, social and political reformation and national organisation on a scale grander than ever thought of before in the annals of our country. If his scheme were adopted far reaching would be its social and political results. One of the leading Anglo-Indian journals of the country, the *Bombay Gazette*, commenting on Keshub's lecture in the western capital in the year 1866, rightly observed that "it was a strange and deeply interesting spectacle to any European to see a Native of India standing bare-headed in the tribune, and with all the energy and fervour of a religious reformer whose convictions are dearer to him than life, urging the Native youth of Bombay who stood around to shake

off the trammels of idolatry and caste prejudice, and seek to do what is right with the help of the One true God." Two years later, in 1868, the same journal commenting upon another lecture of Keshub's delivered in Bombay seriously asked people to ponder what must be the effect of a movement, of which he was the mainspring, upon the destinies of of the British Government of India. The *Gazette* observed :—

"And movement has been begun whose object is to unify the manifold races of India—to give them one common religion, and common social purpose, and to make them one common nation. The step is brief from unity in religion, in social economy, in national feeling, to a common political creed, and the achievement of a political destiny. The Brahmo Samaj is not merely the new Church of India, which undoubtedly some day or other is to take the place, over the length and breadth of the land, of the idolatrous temples which surrounded us; for even already in its very infancy it is a mighty political and social engine, doing life and death battle with purely social usages— if we can speak of anything being purely social, and not mixed up and identified with religion in the life and customs of the Hindus. The men, who generation after generation, have trained themselves in the arena of intellectual gladiatorship, not merely in a conflict with idolatry, but in combating caste, advocating widow-marriage, and effecting a secular as well as a religious reformation throughout India, will be found, when the time comes or occasion demands, to discuss the merits of the English occupation."

That the established Government of the country has no apprehension from the success of the Brahmo Samaj is amply borne out by the fact that Keshub himself made loyalty to sovereign an article of the

new creed propounded by him. But the above extract goes unquestionably to prove that at a time when the Indian National Congress was still in the womb of futurity and most of its lions were either mere curbs or were not even born, the Brahmo Samaj had begun and done a great deal of work in the unification of the people of India ; and the political propaganda of the Congress itself owes not a little to the initiatives of the Brahmo leader. In matters of social reform, in the matter of female education, there are, of course, praiseworthy attempts on all sides to-day, But that the Brahmo Samaj under the leadership of Keshub Chunder Sen, who believed no reform possible without religion, has been the most potent and practical factor in the matter of reforms of all kinds and their harbinger must, in bare regard for truth, be admitted without the least hesitation.

Thus Keshub Chunder Sen was a mighty force in all that he did and said. May our countrymen of all shades and grades of opinion be similarly guided by the divine hand in their private life and public ideals is the earnest prayer of us all.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

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BY JAMES LUKE.

*November 19, 1905.*

I VERY gladly avail myself of the invitation of the Editor of *Unity and the Minister* to give brief expression in this annual memorial number to my whole-hearted admiration and love for Keshub Chunder Sen—a man who was and is a spiritual leader to his

people, a teacher and a guide, not only by his spoken and written words, but also by that quiet power which radiates from a holy life. His one work was the ministry of reconciliation ; to reconcile man to his brother man, and then again to God, in one word, to help according to the extent of the talents and time and opportunities given to him, to bring in the Kingdom of God (to him emphatically the Kingdom of *The Father*) among men on earth. It was quite a revelation to me, new as I then was to India and to Indian religious thought at the time, to read the Oriental Christ and to perceive the heart-grip which Jesus Christ the Master of us all, had on Keshub Chunder Sen, and while wondering, I heard a voice saying, " Other sheep I have which are not of this fold them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice and there shall be one flock and one shepherd." " I, if I be lifted up out of the earth will draw all men unto me." " Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in Heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother," and then of a truth I perceived that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him. Keshub Chunder Sen, with whole purpose of heart, followed the light that was in him (What more can anyone do ?) and that led him into a deeper acquaintance and more profound sympathy with Jesus Christ than even the majority of Western Christians appear to possess. The study which our friend had made, and the knowledge he had acquired of comparative religions led him to see that The Father had never been absent from his human family all through the ages, and that His one purpose through all the various forms of religion (crude and cultured) that have been and that now exist, is to waken the heart-hunger of His children after the

living God, and to find that only in love and trust and obedience to their Father can the children find satisfaction and the life which is life indeed. Keshub said that mere perfunctory attention to religious rites and ceremonies and recitations of creeds and confessions were of no avail—that the one grand test of a true religion was its power to produce a godlike character. And it was because he found, not in the Christianity of the various sects, or in the Christianity of the various creeds, but in the very vital Christianity of the spiritual Christ himself, the dynamic power capable to reconciling men to their Father, that he gave his whole-souled allegiance to the Man of Calvary, the great High Priest of Humanity, who now sits upon the Throne under the Coronation title of "The lamb," proclaiming by that expressive symbol the Sacrificial Love ruled at the heart of the universe of God. Keshub Chunder Sen knows Jesus Christ now as it was not possible for him to know when in the days of his flesh, and I am sure that his followers of the New Dispensation who believe in One God, One Scripture, One Church, and in the Eternal Progress of the Soul, will, taking their start from the point where their sainted leader left them, follow on to know their Lord and Master more and more; deepening their acquaintance with Him as the days go by, and find in this fruitful quest the harmony of knowledge and holiness, love and work, *yoga* and asceticism in their highest development—the fulfilment of the prayer "Father thy kingdom come and thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." I close with the words of Keshub Chunder Sen, "None but Jesus, none but Jesus, none but Jesus ever deserved this bright, this precious diadem, India; and Jesus shall have it."

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

BY REV. A. B. WANN.

*Principal, General Assembly's Institution.*

A RECENT re-perusal of some of the writings of Keshub Chunder Sen has but deepened the feelings and strengthened the convictions that I have long had concerning him, as a man of most sincere convictions, beautiful simplicity of character, and practical spirituality. His eloquence, his power of swaying men, and his desire to find good in every phase of religious life have never been questioned. And as the echoes of controversy on mere personal matter die away, we can hear again more clearly his own voice uttering its message to his countrymen, and to us also who are so closely united to them.

How much he imbibed from the general spirit of the Brahmo Samaj and how much he himself contributed to the formation of that spirit may be a matter of controversy. But a Christian Missionary in Bengal cannot but take him as a type and representative of that spirit, and rejoice in the strong constructive and reforming Theistic movement in which he was for so many years the leading figure. He took a stand for the equality of men, the recognition of woman's place in a healthy social organism, the cause of peace, justice, and temperance. And the basis of his position was the character of God and His Universal love for mankind.

In these days when political controversies are embittered, and the unthinking or evil-thinking are setting up again barriers between race and race, one cannot but pray for an extension and renewal of the feeling which ran through all Keshub's many

utterances on the relations of England and India, and for the deeply religious conviction of the God of Providence whose overruling hand has united the destinies of these countries. No more patriotic Indian ever breathed, but his eyes were not blinded to the evils which India, left to itself, was likely to perpetuate. No more loyal subject of the British Crown could be found ; but his tongue was not dumb to speak of errors in administration or short-comings of sympathy in the ruling race. He found no antagonisms of interest between India and England, because he was profoundly alive to the moral and spiritual interests of his country, and saw the hand of God in the opportunities and awakening and reformation which the British Raj had made possible and had in part directly afforded.

Like all men, he might have made mistakes ; and no doubt there were many ready to put the worst construction on them. A Christian Missionary may be permitted to say that regret mingles with the admiration with which he regards Keshub Chunder Sen. But he remembers that Keshub was a pioneer. He called no man master, but held his own way through the jungle of religious, moral, and social difficulties before him. He has made it easier for others to follow. And if he ever strayed, and if he failed to make a clear cut way right through to open ground, he was none the less a noble and inspiring example of unselfish devotion to his country and his God, of catholic sympathy, and of spiritual life.

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## AN ESTIMATE OF KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

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BY REV. G. H. ROUSE, D. D.

BABU KESHUB CHUNDER SEN was one of the most important factors in the development of religious thought in India, specially in Bengal, during the nineteenth century.

He taught the people, and brought into prominence, such great truths as the Fatherhood of God, the universal brotherhood of man, the importance of purity of heart and life as contrasted with mere outward religion, the need and blessedness of communion with a living personal God. He took an important part in producing the very high esteem for Jesus Christ which is held by such a large number of intelligent Hindus at the present time.

He exerted a strong influence against idolatry, caste and the various social evils which do so much harm in India.

He was a man raised up by God for the accomplishing of these good ends.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

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BY JOSIAH BAKER.

*In Christian Life, London dated, August 12, 1905.*

THOUGH it is ~~twenty~~ twenty-five years since the Welcome Soiree was held (April 12th, 1870 at Hanover-Square Rooms, London, in connection with the visit to this country of Mr. Sen, the distinguished Indian



reformer, it is surely not unbefitting to recall the worth and work of this truly remarkable man. In so doing one has been led to turn to a reflection of O ville Dewey concerning his notable contemporary, William Ellery Channing, and uttered after his decease : "The commemoration of the good man can never be too late, nor can he be held too long in our remembrance." Among the enthusiastic gathering assembled to welcome Chunder Sen were Samuel Sharpe, then President of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. Rev. Robert Spears, who organised the meeting Rev James Martineau, and Rev. Stopford A. Brooke. It is gratifying to note in the preface to the account of this English visit (published in 1871 and edited by Sophia Dobson Collete) that some of the most honoured among our statesmen and philanthropists, and among the leaders of religious conviction in the Established and Dissenting Churches of Great Britain, came forward to welcome Mr. Sen's efforts, in every part of the country which he visited. The testimony even concerning this great reformer (from another source) is that he was drawn to Chaitanya and Buddha and other leaders of religion, but most of all to Jesus Christ.

Adverting now to the volume already alluded to as edited by Miss Collett, one of the choicest testimonies that ever welled forth from human lips is that given by Mr. Sen concerning his own divine enlightenment, when preaching on "The Living God," at Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds, Said he : "When it pleased Him to reveal Himself unto me, I know very well that He put some faith into my heart, faith in His word, faith in His promise to save me and my country. I did not for one moment waver. It was not an uncertain ambiguous sound that came from the clouds, but the voice of the living God that I

'heard in the depths of my heart. He said unto me, 'Pray, for by prayer shall men be saved,' and ever since that time up to the present moment I have found, both in my own life and the life of my co-religionists in India, that salvation can never be had except through unceasing prayer. Centuries of superstition and idolatry, of whatever form or manner we can no longer place any faith, but we have determined to go to the feet of the Lord. We have lost faith in the world, faith in books, faith in dogmas and doctrines. Whoso wanteth life must go to the living God, and he that wanteth death must worship the 'letter that killeth.' He has told us repeatedly, and in a variety of ways has He taught us, that He liveth with us, that we are the temple of the Lord, and that He has consented to dwell in our hearts, impure and sinful though we be. We attach the greatest possible importance to prayer. It is only as author of our salvation that the Lord is our Father, Ay, He is near and sweet unto us. He is sweeter than all prophets, sweeter than Christ, sweeter than the Bible that you so rely upon, sweeter than all things on earth. . . . Oh, you know not how thankful are we to Him that He has placed us in this salvation; that He has brought us out of the Egypt of idolatry and is leading us to that holy land where there is everlasting and abiding gladness."

Do we wish for a finer illustration than this experience of Mr. Sen affords, of that significant assertion of the Apostle Peter? "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Complying with an invitation to attend a special reception by the United Kingdom Alliance at Manchester, it is deeply interesting to observe the fearless manner in which he spoke out concerning the serious defects of the

British Government of India. What a magnificent example his faithful words on this occasion afford to all statesmen who have the best interests of India and our own country really at heart. Said he : " The British Government has shown our people that for the sake of money great evils could be encouraged. I wish my countrymen could believe that such a thing was impossible with a Christian Government : but no, things have come to pass which no longer allow this evil to be veiled from their eyes. They see clearly that the British Government is actuated by sordid motives of filthy lucre, and for the sake of a few millions of pounds, is really doing prodigious mischief by encouraging this great evil of intemperance in India. I am sorry to hear it said by some Englishmen in this country that the Hindus are not temperate ; that the Government did not make them intemperate, but that they were so before the advent of the British Government. I should always stand forward to protest against this statement, for I do believe that my countrymen were always simple, and sober, and abstemious. Whatever a few individuals, or a few races here and there, might do under the influence of the worst passions of the heart, or whatever the teachings and practices of certain exceptional Hindu sects may be, it is an admitted fact that throughout the length and breadth of India temperance forms the chief trait in the national character of the Hindu. It cannot be denied that the influence of the drinking habits of European residents in India, and the alarming number of liquor shops opened in the country under British administration, have introduced this dreadful evil there, and effected a sad change in the taste and habits of the people. Famines and epidemics have often desolated India and carried off thousands in a few hours ; but they are, in comparison, not such

gigantic evils as intemperance is. It is really far more frightful than any other national calamity. Will that people be doomed to sin and death in order that the State may make money? The Government has no right to do this. This is a principle established by Divine Law and human law, and by Christianity, if Christianity is worth anything. I have no faith in that Christianity, I must honestly and candidly say, which can teach a Government to encourage the great sin of intemperance. I do not agree with Christian missionary friends in India on many questions of Christian doctrines and dogmas, but I cannot understand how it is that they look with stolid apathy on the growth of this evil in India, and do not protest this most iniquitous traffic."

Speaking on behalf on the Peace Society at Finsbury Chapel he said, "I really cannot tell how followers of the Prince of Peace can ever go to war. The demon of war requires to be crushed down immediately and in every possible way. By resorting to newspapers, by using our influence in our own private circles, by means of public preaching, and by means of our own example and conduct, let us try to induce all sections of the human family to fraternise with each other. On for the day when the din of battle shall no longer be heard upon earth ! . . . May I ask your permission to read a Sanskrit verse, which I have no doubt will be acceptable :—  
'Forgiveness conquers men. What is there which forgiveness cannot achieve? What can the wicked do to him who holds the sword of peace in his hand?'" All Christian individual and nations who hold this sword of forgiveness and peace in their hands will achieve the greatest triumph which it is possible for man to achieve—a victory far more glorious than any victory that was achieved in the battle-field—a victory of peace over war—a victory of truth over

error, of light over darkness, of brotherhood over enmity, strife, and contention. I call upon all my brethren in England, I call upon France, and Germany and Italy, and all continental Governments, I call upon generous-hearted statesmen, philanthropists, Sunday-school teachers, and reformers of all kinds—I call upon all as an humble representative of the Hindu race, to combine together in order 'to' kill the demon war, and promote "peace on earth and good will among men."

Now that, doubtless, many of those who so heartily took part in the loud applause which followed Mr. Sen's speech have gone over to the great majority, shall those of us who are still favoured with the great privilege of uttering a word in support of so urgent and imperative a call as that advocated by this brave Indian reformer, allow ourselves to remain, or to become, indifferent through lack of devotion and true courage? If the speeches of Wendell Phillips in America were rightly regarded as meriting a place amongst their classics, surely this like-minded, fearless, and truth-loving man, Chunder Sen is also deserving of abiding appreciation and regard in the grateful remembrance of his character and work, as recorded in the printed volume narrating his influential visit to this country in 1870. Who can read Miss Collett's admirable and timely compilations without feeling moved to admire and love so true and noble a man? Doubtless there are many among those who have perused these published addresses who would have been greatly delighted and heartily grateful had they been privileged to listen to the delivery of them from the speaker's lips.

There are many touching and significant passages in the record of his English visit that space will not admit of our transcribing here. Perhaps one might venture to quote a few further sentences, though

having already given so many. Said he, "We must always be found diligent, industrious, active, and unwearied in our efforts to promote the welfare of others. Purity of character, cleanness of conscience, is one of the highest treasures on earth, and we must try to gather up such treasures in our sojourn in this world. We must be righteous; we must practically discharge our duties to the society. Go to the helpless, the poor, the miserable children of God in various parts of the world, and try to befriend them and assist them according to your means and circumstances. Let our devotion be warm; let us not go through cold ritual cold forms of prayer, but let our hearts be warm; let our souls give out fresh devotions, fresh prayers every day of our life. We must love God with the soul. But, above all, our love of God must be emotional; we must love God with the heart. That is the great thing needed in modern times. We must confess that we have neglected our hearts, that we have done them injustices, that we have not taken care of them properly. My brothers and sisters, I, as an Indian, do humbly beseech you to feel the great God who is your Father and my Father. After all those dreary systems of theology through which Christendom has passed, the lifeless, heartless, careless dogmas of cold intellectualism, men's hearts have become dry, and we cannot but feel the deep necessity of a shower of genial moral emotions, and affections over the hearts of all men. I have always felt that the Brahmo-omaj, or the Reformd National Church of India, to which I belong, is God's work in the fulness of times. It is a great thing to emancipate a large number of human beings from the thralldom of idolatry and caste, and it is, just the work in which we are engaged. There can be but One True God and one true Church. I hope and trust that all

Christians will eventually recognise the common basis of the essential doctrines of Christ. The love of God and the love of man will constitute the only creed of a Christian in the future Church, and all differences will be reconciled, all manner of sectarianism will perish, in order that the children of the same God may worship Him as their common Father. I should be a traitor to the Universal Church of Theism to which I belong, if my heart and soul were not capacious enough to take in the whole length and breadth of the Christian Church. I appear before you to-night as an advocate of the religion of love. Let sectarianism die out—die a natural death, for the time has come for its death. We are beginning to feel that we have hitherto unrighteously kept ourselves aloof from each other. We must give education not only to the men, but also to the women in India. We must improve and reform the marriage customs—we must make the people understand the sacred duties and responsibilities of marriage. In fact, we must not rest satisfied with offering weekly prayers at churches and prayer meetings, but we must bring true religion into our homes, and improve and purify our daily life. Greater truth than this I do not possess—that God is Love: the sweetness of God's love conquers man's hideous sinfulness and wickedness. I am a great sinner, but my God's mercy is greater than the multitude of my sins. His love is more powerful than the power of evil working in the midst of my heart. and if men and women are to be saved, and nations are to be regenerated I am sure, and most confidently do I say it, that they will not be saved by a multitude of dead doctrines, not by the letter that killeth. but by the simple truth that God is Love. The result of my visit to England is that as I came here an Indian, I go back a confirmed Indian; I came here a Theist, I return a confirmed Theist.

I have learnt to love my own country more and more. I came here a believer in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and I shall return confirmed in this belief. On the banks of the Thames, as on the banks of the Ganges, I have opened the secrets of my aspirations and prayers to the one loving and holy God, and He has heard me here as He did there. Whatever city I have visited, I have seen everywhere the same God, the same dear Father. Were it not for this, existence would be a burden, and my visit to England ineffectual. My God is a sweet God, and if you love Him as your Father He will show His sweetness unto you. Forget and forgive all the offence that I may have given you during my stay in this country. My brethren, the time has come for me to say the last word of farewell. From England I go away but my heart will always be with you, and England will always be in my heart. Farewell dear England, 'With all thy faults I love thee still.' arewell, country of Shakespeare and of Newton, land of libery and charity ! Farewell, temporary home, where I realised, and tasted, and enjoyed the sweetness of brotherly and sisterly love ! Farewell, my Father's Western house ! Farewell, my beloved brothers and sisters."

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## APPRECIATION OF KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

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BY THE HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE B. L. GUPTA  
OF THE CALCUTTA HIGH COURT.

*November 25, 1906.*

I CONFESS to a sense of considerable embarrassment in responding to the call of my revered friend,



the Editor, to record my impressions and reminiscences regarding my great relation the late Keshub Chunder Sen. In my early days, I was so near him and at the same time so far removed from him by disparity in respect of age and the veneration which surrounded his name and the awe which it inspired, that I had not the advantage of an independent spectator witnessing his achievements from a distance, nor that of a near and close observer who watched his daily movements and saw him in all his strength. I remember the religious enthusiasm with which he inspired me and other boys of the family staying in the same house with him, and which roused the anger and indignation of the orthodox and elder members of the family. But repressive measures had not the desired effect, and only hastened the development of Keshub Chunder's character and gave an impetus to his onward movement in the path of reform.

India has been rich in her great moral teachers. Keshub Chunder Sen, I venture to think, will occupy a place among the greatest of them. He was a born reformer as he was a born orator. The gentlest and most amiable of human beings, he was uncompromising as a reformer. Considerations of expediency were ruthlessly brushed aside by him in the triumphant assertion of principles. Here in this sacred domain there was no equivocation or compromise. For the sake of principles he suffered much in life ; and by precept as well as by example he sought to imbue all with the same lofty ardour for principles. His religious teachings involved the reform of the existing social order. That indeed was inevitable in a country like India, for our social system is bound up with religious institutions : and the religious teacher must be more or less a social reformer. In his scheme of social reform the elevation of women ..

formed the chief feature. He felt that if society was to be reformed and religion improved, the sympathy and co-operation of our womanhood was essential; for indeed there is no impress more durable on the brow of manhood than what is left by the mother's hand. The elevation of women thus formed a part of that religious mission to which he had consecrated his life. And let it be said to his lasting honour that no matter what difference there may exist among different sections of the Brahmo Samaj, the impulse which he gave to female education endures as a potent factor in the general work of the Samaj. His attitude towards Christianity was well known; and it is no exaggeration to say that his teachings have determined the attitude of educated opinion in relation to Christianity and its great founder. He regarded Christ as one of the inspired prophets of mankind, and his countrymen have accepted that view. I have no desire to rekindle into life the ashes of a forgotten controversy. But I venture to think that the verdict of posterity with regard to Keshub Chunder Sen will be that he too is entitled to a place among the prophets of our race; for without special divine favour and grace—call it inspiration if you like—he could not have achieved all that he did in the span of a too brief life. The longer he lived, the higher he mounted God-wards, and his final religious aspirations shaped themselves forth in the establishment of harmony between all creeds and religions. Here was the practical realization in the domain of religion of the great principle to which he clung through life and which he enforced with an eloquence all his own—the principle of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. In the closing days of his great career, as he approached nearer and nearer to his Maker, peace became his watch-word, and a sublime feeling of tranquility

possessed his soul. It bodied itself for in the Church of the New Dispensation wherein he sought to reconcile the jarring notes of discordant creeds and preached universal peace for all men. As with his last breath he sighed for peace and good will among all men may we not, following his teachings, strive and pray for peace in this unhappy and distracted land of ours—peace among ourselves, good will between the rulers and the ruled.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

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BY REV. ALEX TOMORY, M A.,

*Duff College.*

IT is well to remember the great dead, if for no other reason than to stimulate our generation to imitate their deeds. On this ground the annual celebration of Keshub Chunder Sen is not only defensible but laudable. He undoubtedly deserves to rank among the most distinguished sons of Bengal in the department of constructive religion. He deeply impressed his own generation and moved men as no other leader has since been able to do. When one asks coldly, what did he achieve? the answer is general rather than particular. Not by institution that he founded, but by men whom he impressed is Keshub Chunder Sen to be judged. He influenced the religious tone of Bengal for a generation, he made its atmosphere. He had a natural genius for religion, a style of oratory that kindled religious feeling, a vigorous personality that drove his vivid phrases deep into the hearts of his hearers. He was intensely earnest. He combined

a dominating love for India with a generous outlook on all that is best in the world. He was an eclectic, selecting what he deemed best in other faiths to deepen the religious convictions of his hearers.

At this crisis in the history of India when the misunderstanding between Indians and Europeans is acute, it would be god-send to have another Keshub Chunder Sen. He was a moralist rather than a politician, a social and ethical reformer, a religious force; and his unifying influence would be of great value in our day. He had strong convictions on many subjects: but with this he combined a conciliatory disposition, which went far to win opponents.

What is wanted now is another leader like the man we celebrate. Where shall we find him? How shall we describe him? He must recognise the solid contribution of Christianity to the welfare of the world, and adapt its message, as the Spirit shall direct, to the Eastern mind. He must gain the confidence of the West and announce to it what his people are ready to accept, as a basis for discussion and argument. He must kindle other minds to respond. Since Keshub's day mutual understanding on religion between East and West has not advanced much in Calcutta, although systematic study of comparative religion has materially altered the outlook of the Western world on the religions of India. The cultured man from Europe and America understands and appreciates Indian thought better than his predecessors. Has a corresponding rate of progress been maintained on the other side? I may, be wrong, but I seem to note a growing impatience of Western religious thought in middle classes in Calcutta. For the benefit of the world, it is desirable that the subtle intuition of the East should blend with the vigorous and practical commonsense of the

West, and form a finer variety of religious experience than either alone can yield. The day of open antagonism is over. But in its place there has sprung up not the frank friendliness that we desire, and that Keshub Chunder Sen sought to produce, but a separate and an almost sullen aloofness, that destroys the hope of co-operation. At this time then what we need is a large-souled Indian reformer who loves not only his own land, but the whole world as well, and who has a passion for Truth, and a desire to give himself to win the triumph of unity.

The best celebration of Keshub Chunder Sen will be found in the imitation of his spirit and in the adaptation to our altered days of principles that animated him. The world is waiting for a Reconciler. We cannot go on with advantage on the present basis of suspicion.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REFORM.

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BY N. N. GHOSE, ESQ., F. R. S. L., &C. &C.

IT was a fixed article of Keshub Chunder Sen's faith that the regeneration of India lay through religion. That the religion of a people ultimately determines its life, is true in a great measure of all nations. It is certainly true of India, of the Hindus in particular. The vital fact about Hindus has always been their religion. Their home life, their political ideas and institutions were all founded upon their religion. The relation of father to son, of husband to wife, their duties to each other, were

determined by religion. Neighbourly duties, duties to the poor, loyalty to the sovereign, were all part of the religious ideal of life. Keshub Chunder Sen, in spite of his reforming and iconoclastic tendencies, fully realised this. In fact, it is precisely because he realised this that he came to be reforming and iconoclastic. He had a deep and earnest conviction that the way to India's social and political advance lay through a reform of her religion. Social and political life was founded upon the character, and character was founded upon religion. His deliverance upon this point are clear and emphatic. In a lecture on "Religious and Social Reformation" he said "Do not, then, white wash the edifice while the foundations are so weak and cannot bear the superstructure; try not to gild the dead body, to adorn it with jewels, ornaments, and costly vestments, while there is no life within,—while the pulse does not beat. Give India life before you give her railroads and telegraphs, and all other advantages of material prosperity. Who is to enjoy these blessings?—is the question. Spiritually impoverished India cannot rise up, has not the heart, has not the muscles, to rise up in order to enjoy this superabundance of material comfort which you have placed before her. . . . Hindu society has a very peculiar structure. Here, in India we do not see religion on one side, society on the other; but religion and society are interwoven with each other. It has been justly said that the Hindus walk and sit religiously, eat and drink religiously, work and sleep religiously;—their social organism is interwoven with their religion. If, therefore, you wish to reform the social organism of India, you must, in the first instance, give her true religion, or else your attempts will be ineffectual." Later on in the same speech he said: "All the social reforms I would propose for your consideration are involved

in this grand radical reformation,—religious reformation."

In politics, as in society and religion, Keshub Chunder Sen had bold ideas of reform and he did not mince matters in formulating them. In his lecture on "England's Duties to India" he said: "It is my firm conviction that you Englishmen stand there in India merely as trustees. You hold India on trust, and you have no right to say that you will use its property, its riches, or its resources, or any of the privileges which God has given you, simply for the purpose of your own selfish aggrandizement and enjoyment." While he insisted on British Government recognising their trusteeship, he realised the Divine destiny that had brought them here. In a short speech entitled "India and India's God" he said: "The British nation has been brought here by the hand of Providence. There is no secular agency. The truly philosophical and religious heart will see God in history or in all sound political movements. Everything that is bad or inhuman is being constantly eliminated. The Western sciences are coming into India in the name of God and who is that bold emperor who can say to the rising surges of the advancing tide of Western civilization—Thus far shall you go and no further? We shall prostrate at the feet of England and learn those truths which she is destined to teach us. We must gratefully accept these foreign force, because they come in the name of God and not in the name of Empress Victoria or any other human being. There is the omnipotent hand in them and we dare not resist God. It is a sober and plain truth that God is acting in our midst, God has pronounced a benediction on India."

These passages are worthy of attention from more points of view than one. They bring into relief some of the distinctive opinions of Keshub Chunder Sen.

They do justice to his memory and are worthy of record in an article meant to be a commemoration. But they have another value as well. These voices of the dead come to us with peculiar force at the present moment. They are a lesson and a warning. They call us back to sense and sobriety and remind us that, after all, philosophy must prevail over passion. One of the aspirations of the moment is the creation of an Indian nationality. A nationality is never created by voluntary, spasmodic efforts. It grows; and in growing takes its own time. The natural laws of social evolution will not bend to the caprice of impetuous agitators, and will not be hastened in their operation by the forces of racial antipathy or political animus. But whether created or developed, nationality will demand the inspiration of religion. The loves and hates of religion are the deepest. A common sentiment, a political opposition to the Government will be a poor bond of union for a nationality which consists of races and sects separated by the widest and deepest of religious differences. It is useless for the Hindu and the Mahomedan to unite in a friendly embrace to-day to oppose an English official, when to-morrow they may have to fly at each other's throat over the slaughter of a cow. Hinduism is the great stumbling block in the way of a national unification, even of the Hindu races. If a Hindu marries one not a Hindu the offspring cannot be Hindu. Not only so, but a Hindu of Bengal cannot, in accordance with Hindu practices, marry a Hindu of the United Provinces, the Punjab, or Maharastra. A Bengalee Brahmin cannot marry into a Brahmin family of the United Provinces. National unification in the proper sense of the phrase would therefore mean the uprooting of Hinduism and the extinction of the Hindu race. This is equivalent to saying that Hindu ideas



and practices must be altered if they are to be included in an Indian Nationality. The question then is, Which is more worth having, a Nationality or Hinduism ?

If questions of religion are inseparable from those of social development, they are no less bound up with those of political advance. Self-Government, resting upon methods of election, can never be fully established in a country where the electorate can never be a homogeneous body by reason of diversity of races and sects, that is, by reason of the absence of a nation. It would be a mistake to suppose, however, that Keshub Chunder Sen valued religion only as an instrument of social and political reform. Not intellect, not even character but the religious sense is the greatest fact about Man. It is his distinctive mark. It is this which draws his eyes upward, bids him prepared for a higher and more lasting life than that on earth, and reveals his kinship with the Most High. It is, therefore, the highest privilege and the special glory of human nature. No real advance, individual or national, is possible without a proper use and training of the religious sense. Our highest aspirations, our deepest convictions, our most energetic actions, our most certain and durable progress, must in the last resort rest on religion. Even such particular social innovations as abolition of caste or the remarriage of widows, are of value and vitality not when they spring from merely utilitarian considerations but when they are the natural and spontaneous result of a system of religious faith. And political activity is never more sincere or sustained than when it is, as it was throughout Gladstone's career, inspired by religious convictions. It is as true to-day as it has ever been that the road to India's social and political reform lies through religion. The instincts of human nature, the laws of national growth, and the

experience of history, all point to the impossibility of building up a great social and political fabric in contempt of religion. India's hope rests upon an awakening of the religious sense and a religious life. To start a scheme or movement at random and then invoke God's blessing upon it, is a mockery. Divine blessing is to be had not for the asking but only when it is deserved. Have the people deserved better than the Government? Religion must be the main-spring of life and thought, and not a mere cant of the stump orator. To make a fetish of Politics and use Religion only as a tool when necessary, is to make the sovereign and the slave interchange place; and a swift and serious catastrophe can be the only result of that sacrilegious perversion.

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## AN ESTIMATE OF KESHUB CHUNDER SEN'S WORK.

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BY RAY YATINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY, M. A., B. L.

WHEN my Reverend friend Babu Mohendra Nath Bose asked me to give expression to my appreciation of the life and teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen, I readily agreed to his request: because I thought it would give me an opportunity of paying publicly my tribute of respect to the sacred memory of the late Minister of the New Dispensation Church.

The life of Keshub Chunder Sen is unique in many respects. His life and teaching are, so to say, an object lesson not only to our countrymen but to the inhabitants of the whole world, who take any interest in matters religious and spiritual. He, it

seems to me, lived as a towering man far above the noise and difference of the worldly men and thereby proving that religion is based upon the fundamental laws of our very existence and not upon ignorance or sickly sentimentalism. In these days of the expansion of the materialistic tendencies, life of such pious men as that of the subject-matter of my thesis, is a conclusive proof that the love of God is "the only one thing needful." His life, if it teaches anything, teaches us and the misguided apostles of the materialistic philosophy, that our mind, constituted as it is finds no rest until it attains to God. His God-loving nature was a thing which particularly appeals to us Hindus, because I am aware of no religion (except Christianity to a certain extent) in which love of God plays such pre-eminent a part. In fact, I am ready to go so far as to hold that religion without love of God is but a shadow without a substance. The utterances of Keshub Chunder Sen, specially those which he made in his last days, were inspired with such an amount of the nectar of divine love that nowhere, we shall find its equal or parallel except in the inimitable writings and sayings of the Indian Vaishnavas. His life, as is the case with the lives of all great men in all ages, has a two fold aspect—one general and the other local. I shall now address a few words under these two heads trying to show which of the principal features of his life are of a local and temporary interest and which are of permanent and abiding interest.

Students of the history of the principal religious sects of the world are painfully aware how the followers of different religions, forgetting the central object of all religions and the whole nature of man, strove against one another for polemical victory. The history of the world is full of the record of the deep and far-reaching consequences of all these

strifes and religious quarels. Religious disputationists (I regret to say that many adherents of the principal religions of the world, instead of bringing peace and love towards mankind, have brought rivalry, quarrel and even fighting amongst themselves) desire (in 90 cases out of every 100) only to vanquish their antagonists and not to either convince themselves or others of the truth of all truths which cannot be anything else than Divinity Himself. It was well that Lord Buddha inculcated upon his disciples who went on missionary tours, not to enter into controversy with any one but simply to present to the world at large their life which is an embodiment of the religious truths which they believed to be true. Notwithstanding this sacred injunction of Lord Buddha himself, we know how different were the paths chosen by many of his followers, Barren and dry religious controversies as in similar controversies regarding other matters always take the mind of men further and further from the pursuit of the truth. When the world is full of such religious rivalries and unhealthy differences of opinion and belief, well it is that Providence, which always watches and guides our destinies, brings forth a great man amongst us—blind followers of the dead theologues—to remind us that we are leaving aside the kernel of the religious truths and fightings only for their husks, and that we, forgetting our service to, and love towards God, are only worshipping false fetishes engendered by imperfect and dead theology which is divorced from the benefit of the sap which is only possibility when it is rooted in the true religious belief and religious life. Keshub Chander Sen's mission may be briefly summarised by saying that his whole life was consecrated to prove to the world that, notwithstanding differences in theology, religion and its culture and aim cannot be different—that the followers of the so-

called different religions of the world, so far as they attempt to dislodge others, are only fighting with the air—that the former without understanding the deep meaning of the teachings of their respective Masters, think that the Masters taught contradictory opinions—and lastly that the Divine Masters, inasmuch as they received religious truths from the Fountain Head of all truths, cannot teach differently. We know how we need very badly these sublime truths to preach which the advent of Keshub Chunder was ordained by the all-loving Providence. How different would the history of the world have been, had these truths been perceived and acted up to by the followers of the different sects of religious believers. But mysterious are the ways of Providence, and it is not so. Therefore the life of such truly great men, as that of our revered Keshub Chunder Sen, is a kind of beacon-light serving to guide the followers of different faiths and preventing them from falling astray. Such is in my humble view, the contribution which Keshub's life made to the religious history of the world. May Bengal—nay the whole of India—be proud of producing such a great man.

Western education and together with it, material science and civilization have made rapid encroachments upon the simple and pure life of the Indians since the advent of the Europeans to this country. It has shaken the very foundations of the Eastern civilization and piety. It was necessary that, in these days of our fight with the Western materialism, there should arise in our midst generals capable enough of holding their own against the fearful march of Western materialism. Rommohan Roy and Keshub Chunder Sen were our generals in this campaign. They proclaimed once for all that Eastern piety had nothing to fear from the aggressions

of the West. The students of the religious history of the Indians know well that whenever any anti-theistic opinion was seriously preached here the doctrine was repugnant to the whole heart of the Indian and there arose men ready to stem the tide of Godless belief and life dominated by such belief. This was a protestantism worthy of the deeply religious bent of the mind of the Indians. Keshub's life is only a phase of that protestantism suited to the present circumstances. God ! grant that my countrymen profits by this protestantism as enunciated by Keshub Chunder and be not led away by the enchantment and temptation of the siren of the Western materialism.

Last and not the least of the services rendered by Keshub Chunder to his countrymen, is presentation of the Divine life and teachings of Sri Gouranga to the English educated portion of my countrymen. Before Keshub's acceptance of Sri Gouranga, the Prophet of Navdipa was practically unknown to our English knowing countrymen. By bringing before our educated countrymen the nectar of the life of Sri Gouranga, Keshub Chunder, I am of opinion, has placed them under a deep debt of obligation, because if love of God be the true kernel of all religions I am not aware of the life of any of the Masters whose life is love incarnate in a special sense as Sri Gouranga is. Such a man as does all these things is really entitled not only to our reverence but to our love also. I hope and trust that my countrymen will study and ponder over the truths inculcated by Keshub.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN IN ENGLAND.

BY DR. JESTLIN CARPENTER.

*Principal, Manchester College, Oxford.**November 24, 1907.*

EARLY in April 1870, Keshub Chunder Sen landed in England. On the evening of the 12th a crowded soiree was held in the Hanover Square Rooms, London, to welcome him. For nearly five months he travelled through the length and breadth of the land. He visited many cities ; he looked upon the mountains and lakes of Scotland ; he preached in churches and chapels ; he spoke at public meetings. With untiring zeal he laboured in our midst till the time came for his return to his own land. On Sept. 17th friends at Southampton bade him farewell, and we in this country saw him no more.

For what had he come ? Many causes, perhaps, had drawn him hither. It was less frequent then, than it has since become, for natives of India to visit England. He had a genuine love for this people, for its great literature and its political institutions ; and he had a noble high minded faith in the British desire for the welfare of the vast multitudes under their care in the East. He believed that when English men and women realised the nature of some of the difficulties and grievances under which India laboured, they would be moved to remedy them. First and most prominent, therefore, was his purpose to present the wants of his countrymen to the thinking portion of the public in Great Britain. But that was not all. He saw in his own life time the beginning and progress of a great

religious movement. He was its prophet and leader, the trusted exponent of its principles, the inspirer of its work. He desired to enlist the sympathies of England in its advance. He saw that to do that he must convince her not only of the reality and force of the religious belief and life cherished by the Brahmo Samaj, but also of the importance of the part which religion had played in the whole history of India. By this he hoped to unite East and West in a common fellowship of life in the Spirit.

These two great objects were constantly in his mind. When he first arose to speak, the dignity of his appearance commanded immediate respect. His noble presence, his stately and impressive figure, his face beaming with intelligence and good will, his somewhat massive jaws (bespeaking resolute determination), constrained vast audience to listen. It was to no halting utterance that they harkened. In the purest English, the Hindu guest argued his case, pleaded the cause of his countrymen or dwelt on the great fundamental affirmations of religion. Without faltering and without haste, with a tact born of noble feeling, and an earnestness that moved the most indifferent, he spoke of great social abuses, and enforced the need and duty of reform. He possessed the magic of oratory, for he could conciliate opponents, and win antagonists to reluctant assent. He spoke with singular moderation, and was always loved. Had he been able to devote more time to the great themes of temperance, peace, education, and the like he would have enlisted wide-spread support for measures of social improvement both in India and England.

But the real object that lay deep beneath all speech was the cause of religion. Once make people feel that they stood in the presence of God,



who was the common Father of all, and the barriers of race and caste, of prejudice, suspicion, or mistrust would be removed. Keshub Chunder Sen seemed to his English friends to live from day to day in unseen communion with the Eternal. He carried with him a kind of atmosphere of faith, which diffused itself in the hearts of those who had the simplicity of his trust and love. Here was no conventional religion. It was independent of the forms of Christian tradition, though it could speak in the thought and sometimes in the words of Jesus. It did not need the support of Church or Bible. At a time when the foundations of ecclesiastical belief were being rudely shaken, the Indian preacher did not resort to argument so much as to experience. From the materialism of current scientific philosophy he turned to the temple of the soul; there was the witness of the spirit of God, there was the testimony of generations to the abiding truths of God's work within. He was, indeed, conscious of a wide difference in the modes of religious expression between East and West. He admired the great English philanthropies, but he missed the habits of Hindu devotion. He saw hundreds and thousands of educated men and women giving themselves to the service of the needy and the suffering: but the quiet habits of meditation familiar to his own people seemed unknown to these busy workers. As he went from home to home, and spent his morning hours in seclusion and prayer, he entered in silence into a divine communion from which he drew strength for public speech and social toil. So to many a young heart he made the life of religion real as it had never been before. Here was one who had been ready to give up all for the Truth. No one could hear him relate the incidents which culminated in his leaving the family home in Calcutta, and going

forth, accompanied by his wife, without means of subsistence into a hostile world, and not feel that the power which sustained him in his great venture was something higher and greater than himself. On this he relied for guidance day by day, and it upheld him in his hours of need. So to James Martineau he appeared 'a soul most congenial to the soul of Jesus, a kind of second John. He impressed Frances Power Cobbe not so much by his intellect as by his goodness. He seemed to her 'really to live in God': his simplicity and singleness of mind lifted him into likeness to Christ. In prayer he made others feel that he found his highest joy. There the gates of everlasting life were flung open to him. 'I don't *know* anything about the future,' he once said. 'I only know that when I pray I feel that my union with God is eternal. In our faith, the belief in God and in immortality are not two doctrines but one.'

Never again has England heard from the East a voice like that of Keshub Chunder Sen. His visit occurred at a time when there were men in Church and State of noble breadth of view, and high distinction of character and service, who were ready to respond to his appeal. The chivalrous Dean of Westminster, Arthur Peurbyn Stanley uttered the first words of welcome, allowing no ecclesiastical limitations to restrict his sympathy: and Lord Lawrence supported them with the weight of his great authority and the splendid record of his public labours. Wherever the Hindu missionary went, pleading for the union of England and India in a common brotherhood, men of various sects and denominations greeted his arrival. He accomplished again and again what has really since been effected, as the power of his spiritual faith and the simplicity and purity of his life overcome the bitterness of theological divisions. It was a prophecy of a better age

that shall one day dawn, when there will be something deeper than any outward identity of belief, when mutual understanding and common trust shall bring an inward unity of spirit in the bond of peace. May the highest minds of both countries unite in labouring in their several ways for this great end.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN —A PROGRESSIVE REFORMER.

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BY THE REV. HERBERT ANDERSON

*Secretary, Baptist Mission.*

*November 24, 1907.*

REFORMERS are of two kinds, progressive and conservative. India has had too few of the former, too many of the latter. The conservative reformer sees the path of duty and desires to walk therein; but he sees also the antagonisms he will arouse, the inveterate prejudices he will disturb, the—time-honoured usages that have come down from a degenerate are round which a thousand vested interests entwine. His imagination pictures his fate. Humiliation, acrimonious criticism, insult, loss of friends, and hardest of all the hatred of his kith and kin. Then he wavers. Let us reform, says he, *little by little*. We must not go too fast. Let us train the times to move with us, and seek to make them change gradually the ideas inherited from the past. And so our conservative reformer sits on the fence with truth beckoning him to risk his all in a fall towards the right, while 'custom' and 'the consequences' urge him to keep where he is, if he be not prepared to leave

reform alone altogether, and leave others to take a stand against countless adversaries.

The progressive reformer is made of sterner stuff. Every inch a man, he will attempt the right; and leave consequences with God. Has the Goliath of superstition to be fought? Must he strike at the root of the national faith? Are the very foundations of the social fabric to be laid bare, up-turned and renewed? Are Society's corruptions to be exposed, her social perils to be advertised, her ancient creeds to be criticised in the light of modern culture? He will do it single handed if need be, though no finger be stirred to help him, though every inch of his progress be fought against an uncompromising priesthood, and unscrupulous foes.

The reason for my growing admiration of Keshub Chunder Sen is that the more I come into touch with his spirit and character, the more I feel he belonged to the progressive class of Indian Reformers, a man of clear conviction, dauntless courage, and magnificent enthusiasm. There was a moment in the French Revolution when the Republic was ringed round with enemies. The Prussians were on the Rhine, the Piedmontese in the Alps, the English in the Netherlands, La Vendee had rebelled in the West and Lyons in the East. But Danton cried "We need audacity, and again audacity, and always audacity." That was the glorious motto of Keshub too, and it carried him forward to the pinnacle of his influence, and gave him his niche in the Temple of Fame.

When one remembers the time in which he lived what a far-reaching programme of social and religious reforms he set himself and his followers to achieve! The complete abolition of all caste restrictions; remodelling of rites performed at birth, cremation and Sradha ceremonies to bring them

within the honest interpretation of Brahmo doctrine of the past and future state of the soul; the education and elevation of women;—marriage reform, the abolition of polygamy, widow re-marriage and others too numerous to mention. Many must have been the hours of secret trial, of heart-felt sorrow, and bitter disappointment but the vision of the Seer was his, and when Indian society was stirred to its depth against his stupendous innovations, he was calm amid the storm. He knew it was the path of right he walked and was content.

Many Christians in Great Britain, as in India, have been interested in the relation of Keshub and Christ. When in England, he spoke with no uncertain sound. At Birmingham he said "Now I wish to say that I have not come to England as one who has yet to find Christ. When the Roman-Catholic, the Protestant, the Unitarian, the Trinitarian, the Broad Church, the Low Church, the High Church all come round me and offer me their respective Christs, I desire to say to one and all 'Think you that I have no Christ within me? Though an Indian, I can still humbly say. "Thank God, I have my Christ." And all who were present at, perhaps, the greatest of his oratorical triumph, when in 1880 he delivered his lecture at the Alcutta Town Hall on the subject "India asks who is Christ?" will never forget his impassioned appeal to his fellow countrymen to accept Christ. Like his great predecessor Raja Ram Mohun Roy he prophesied that India is destined to become Christian and cannot escape her destiny. "None but Jesus, none but Jesus, none but Jesus ever deserved this bright, this precious diadem, India, and Jesus shall have it." Every body is aware that it was Christ as the greatest of all Asiatic saints, Keshub appealed to his countrymen to accept, and they are accepting Him, His

ideals, His spirit, His truth. Is it any wonder that Christian men are prepared to thank God for this progressive Theistic Reformer, and to pray as they think of him :—

“ God, give us men. A time like this demands  
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready  
hands.

Men whom the lust of office does not kill,  
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy,  
Men who have honour, men who will not lie  
Tall men, sun crowned, who live above the fog  
In public duty and in private thinking.”

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BRAHMANANDA KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

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BY KUMAR MANMATHA NATH ROY CHOWDHURY  
OF SANTO-H.

*November 24, 1907.*

I AM a Hindu, born and bred. I am, however, able to confess, without the least effort of hesitancy, that I have scant regard for arbitrary dogmas and begottd orthodoxal principles of the old school, with its impenetrable crust of conservatism. I have always striven hard to keep pace with the tide of evolution. *Progress* has all along been my watch-word, and such shackles and fetters of our society as are inconsistent with the catholic and flexible ethics of our traditional religion, have always proved futile to arrest my honest efforts to liberalise my thoughts and to widen my sympathies. It has ever been a deep-seated conviction with me, that our eternal religion, which first heralded to the ignorant humanity the holy proclamation of God, announcing

peace and happiness to His creatures on Earth—the religion which first revealed to the world the wisdom and benevolence of Divine dispensations, and sounded an alarm to sleeping mankind to awake and serve their Great Master—can never be found wanting in that adaptiveness without which it will be absolutely impossible for its followers to admire and appreciate all that is good and holy in a man, no matter to what creed he belongs.

I am, therefore, an ardent admirer of the great Brahmo leader and social reformer, the late lamented Keshub Chunder Sen. His writings and speeches, which I read with absorbing interest, did not fail to draw me, with a magnetic force, towards the master-mind whose stamp of genius they so strikingly bear. Remarkable as they are, for liveness of imagination, vigour of phraseology, cogency of logic and loftiness of philosophic thoughts and ideas, they could not fail to imbue my mind with the refinement, culture and piety of their great and immortal author. It, therefore, gives me genuine pleasure to write in memoriam of such a man, of course, without treading on controversial grounds. It is with inward satisfaction that I comply with the graceful request of the good Editor of *Unity and the Minister* to record in the memorial number of his great journal dedicated to the sacred memory of his great Minister, my deep and abiding appreciation of the unique services he rendered in this wonderful land of philosophy to the glory of God. The one regret which is now uppermost in my heart is that the peace and tranquility of my mind should be disturbed by a personal affair of considerable potency at a time when I have to undertake a sublime task, which will demand unalloyed devotion.

I am confronted with still another difficulty, if it is difficulty at all. The cry of the moment is, "Ring

out the *old* and ring in the *new*." Many long and mortal years have flown away on the wings of time since Keshub Chunder Sen shuffled off his mortal coil and his holy spirit rose Godwards, like an uncaged bird, to fulfil its destiny in a higher world, and the modern materialists may coldly ask why even now the columns of a journal should be thrown open for thoughts and reflections pointing to a life that was full of spiritualism and has long ago disappeared in the melancholy vault of the death, covered by cyprus gloom ?

But, is the life of Keshub Chunder Sen really devoid of living interests ? Have the lessons which he inculcated, during his saintly life, with an eloquence all his own, become antiquated and inoperative ? It is actually deniable that a great man never dies—that his spirit, after the destruction of his mortal frame, the muddy vesture of decay, lives in the minds of men to inspire within them thoughts and sentiments of the noblest type ? Keshub Chunder Sen has no doubt passed away from the stage of the world's affairs—the curtain has no doubt long been dropped on his life—but the beneficent influence of his stainless character and robust manhood has not been withdrawn from among mankind, nor have the bright examples of his saintly life disappeared from his field of action along with his material existence. His life is, therefore, full of living interests and he should be remembered to stimulate our generation to follow in his footsteps. Besides, it is a mistake to suppose that the lips of our mighty shades are closed for ever and it must be perceptible to a mind which has been well developed and refined by an effective moral and intellectual process that the voices of the dead come to us with peculiar force from their ethereal sphere of existence, call it Lymbus, Elysium or any thing else. And who would not wish with the immortal Tennyson :—



“ Star to star vibrates light : may soul to soul  
 Strike thro’ a finer element of her own ?  
 So,—from afar,—touch as at once ?

Keshub Chunder Sen was not merely a social reformer or a gifted orator. He was an extraordinary man with prophetic instincts and inspirations, remarkably endowed with special Divine favour and grace. That is why he was successful to a pre-eminent degree to create an Utopian Situation of his own, which did not exist merely in pleasing metaphors, but which was something really *real*, exercising upon all who came in contact with it, a holy influence, which invariably called forth into existence noble thoughts and ambitions, inflamed genuine enthusiasm, and what is more lofty and sublime roused spiritual convictions of the purest kind.

With the advent of English education, in this country, bringing in its train the reformatory as well as revolutionary forces of the Western civilisation, India was inundated by a flood of a new thoughts and ideas, which stirred her up to feel, as it were, the darkness of comparative ignorance in which she lay immersed quite inert and lifeless. A new life was communicated to her dead bones—her pulse commenced to beat with renewed vigour, and she was possessed of by an irresistible passions to shake off the lethargy and torpor of age. The waves of revolution ran high, carrying before them all barriers and obstacles, sweeping away all worn out landmarks of the old order. In the face of that universal transition, India stood aghast, quite conscious of the fact that she was on the verge of a new era to take a bold plunge into it either to soar higher or to perish in the attempt. Ram Mohan Roy met these new forces with help and guidance. But, before he could perfectly lead them to proper and definite channels, he was called away by God to play his parts elsewhere.

His mantles fell upon Keshub Chunder Sen and the glorious mission, which the great Raja could not thoroughly fulfil within the span of a rather brief life, was carried almost to a successful termination by the great man we celebrate. If Keshub Chunder Sen had not then appeared on the scene, the genial embrace of Christianity would have probably melted the immutable character of our traditional religion, and all the national elements of our civic organisations would have been completely westernised. He regarded Christ as one of the great inspired prophets of mankind, and we all accept that view, but he felt that no *one* religion but a harmony between all creeds could work out India's moral and material salvation. Just as the great prophet of Nadia infused strength into the Hindu community, by preaching gospel of love and rationality, to enable it to withstand the whirlwind of Mahomedanism, so did Keshub Chunder Sen in respect of Christianity, although he did not fail to take the fullest possible advantage of the excellent parables and lofty teachings of Christ, who gave his life-blood to consecrate humanity. Keshub Chunder Sen effectually broke down the reign of prejudice and bigotry—he did not allow the broad cosmopolitan principles upon which the Hindu Religion mainly stands to remain as mere intellectual dogmas and used their light, in a masterly way, to dispel the mists of ignorance. He also brought in new truths from other creeds to illumine the common life of the country, and by effecting such cautious social reforms as appeared to him to be compatible with the moral and intellectual advancement of India, he satisfied the aspirations of his fellow countrymen. In fact, what strikes me most in the miraculous life of Keshub Chunder Sen is his brilliant attempt to build, on the foundation of an universal and cosmopolitan religion, a temple of

unity within the consecrated walls of which people of different creeds and denominations could join hands together as brothers and sisters, to worship their common God and to work out their common salvation, unfettered by prejudice and sectarian dogmas. What he wanted to give his countrymen is a common religious platform where the jarring notes of discordant creeds could be hushed into silence, giving place to a peaceful harmony which can alone unite the different sects and races in India into a *nation*.

Our present day politicians will do well to sit at the feet of Keshub Chunder Sen to learn at least this one great truth, that a nationality cannot be created or developed by artificial efforts of spasmodic nature—that a common political cause, or a common sentiment of political opposition to Government, must prove a very poor bond of unity, and that the task of building up the Indian nationality must demand the inspiration of religion. It cannot be called into blessed existence by the fiat of a king or the harangue of a demagogue. Political unity is no strength unless it is the legitimate result of social and religious coalition. Our political workers would do immense service to their country if instead of prematurely beating their heads against the rocks for self-Government, they set themselves, heart and soul, to give India social and religious unity. Let them first give her an absolutely sound moral backbone and the rest will follow as day follows night.

I would now bring my thesis to a close. It is not possible to estimate in a short notice like this, the value of the innumerable gifts and legacies which the great social reformer has left behind him for us and of the services which he rendered to our country. To anticipate the verdict of history in respect of a

life so vast and complex, to determine the exact nature of the native forces of an intellect so keen and acute, to unmistakably trace out the prospective and the retrospective effects of those forces of society, to form an accurate ideas of the mission for which he was born and to discern to what extent he was successful in fulfilling it, that if a man, who has shown to the world, by precepts and examples, what he actually meant by an establishment of harmony between all creeds—has remodelled his society and brought it in contact with the requirement of modern life, championed the cause of female education, so that our women may properly share with us our joys and comforts, our sorrows and tribulations, like true guardian angels of our homes and hearths—in one word, who untiringly carried on, throughout his saintly life, beneficent works of philanthropy and reform, at an immense personal sacrifice, should be honoured and adored, our tribute of love, respect and admiration is pre-eminently due to the immortal Keshub Chunder Sen. It is a great pity that Calcutta, the city of statues, can boast of no marble or bronze representation of the commanding personality of the great social reformer of modern India, standing before which even the most ignorant of men could say:—

“There studious let me sit  
And hold high converse with the mighty Dead.”

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN AND HIS TIMES.

1907 (?) BY NORENDRA NATH SEN.

*Editor Indian Mirror.*

I GLADLY accede to the request of the Editor of *Unity and the Minister* to jot down a few of my personal recollections of Keshub Chunder Sen, and particularly of my associations with him in the early days of our lives. Keshub and I were first cousins, his father and mine being brothers; he was four years older than myself, and we grew up and were brought up together in our ancestral house. I was Keshub's constant companion through boyhood; we read, played, ate and slept together. No thought of his young mind was hidden from me, and none of mine was hidden from him. When we became men, his path and mine lay differently, but all through life, our affection for each other never underwent the slightest change. As one older than the majority of the boys of our family, Keshub was naturally our leader—a position which he, with his keen mental faculties and his absorbing enthusiasm, would have, at all events, assumed, had he been even the youngest of us all. Full well to this day, I remember his handsome boyish face, ere it developed the sharp but growing lines of a mystic and enthusiast. Many years after, when full six feet high, broad-shouldered, Keshub would move his vast audience by his extraordinary eloquence an accomplished American said of him that he was the picture of the Patrician Roman. It has been my earnest desire for a long time to record my impressions of the life-work of Keshub, as no one had a greater opportunity to witness it at close

quarters than myself; and although it is not possible for me to say all that I saw and know of Keshub in a single article, I gladly avail myself of this opportunity to draw attention to a few points in Keshub's life which seems to me of peculiar interest at this moment. In doing so, I wish publicly to acknowledge, before I go to join him whom I so much admired and loved on earth how much my own life was influenced by his spotless purity, his high moral convictions and his ever-burning zeal to sacrifice himself at the altar of Humanity.

I regard the life of Keshub Chunder Sen as one of immediate interest to us at the present moment. It would be enriching and instructive to the present generation to review how Keshub, with all the great obstacles in his way, laid the foundation of almost every movement tending to the social, moral and religious progress of the people. What did he not do within the comparatively short time allotted to him? He established an Indian College independent of Government aid; he was the first to start an Indo-English daily paper, under the name of the *Indian Mirror*, and also a pice paper in Bengali, called the *Sulav Samachar* which sold by thousands among the masses as well as cultured classes, and proved an effective medium of popular education. He established the Indian Reform Association and the British Indian Society, now no more, for the advancement of the social, moral and religious well being of the people. He also established the India Club and the Albert Institute for promoting social intercourse between Europeans and Indians. He brought about the religious and moral awakening of India, and did signal service to the cause of social reform. He did much to break down the barriers of caste, to mitigate the evil of early marriage, to advance the cause of female education and of widow-

marriage, and to check the growth of intemperance. Before dwelling briefly upon the reforms which Keshub carried out not without serious opposition from the orthodox Hindu community, I would touch upon the times in which Keshub made his appearance in public life. The events and men of that period form a great subject for historical study. Keshub belonged to the second generation of English-educated Indians, the former generation having consisted of such men as Raja Ram Mohun Roy. Raja Radha Kanta Deb and others, who, while imbibing all that was best in Western learning and civilisation, upheld the standard of pure Hindu spirituality. Raja Ram Mohun Roy no doubt, waged a war against the "popular religion" but the end and scope of his mission was primarily the revival of Hinduism through the Vedanta. During the year which followed his death, Hindu society presented a lamentable picture of unbelief, moral laxity and disintegration. The Hindu College, which had begun in 1817 the excellent work of educating the Bengalis in English literature and Western arts and sciences, soon became the stronghold of heterodoxy, scepticism and unbelief. The faith of the younger generation was shaken in popular Hinduism, but no substitute was provided to fill up the void. One of the men who greatly influenced the mental and moral lives of young men of Bengal at that time was the Eurasian poet, Derozio. His pupils, among whom were the scions of some of the aristocratic families in Bengal, developed a morbid love for denationalised habits. The habit of drinking became general, so much so that even students in their teens were known to indulge in the pleasures of the bottle. Bacchanalian orgies, attended with feasting on forbidden food, became the prevailing fashion, and many promising careers were ruined

and cut sort. Those who escaped the Scylla of moral and spiritual decay, fell into the Charybdis of evangelistic Christianity. Dr. Alexander Duff, the Prince of Missionaries, was then at the height of his evangelistic fame and exerted considerable influence upon the minds of the young generation by his extraordinary influence. Many Hindu boys, carried away by the preacher's eloquence, embraced the Christian faith, greatly to the horror of the orthodox Hindu community. Krishna Mohun Banerji, the first Bengali convert of Dr. Duff, was joined subsequently by Gyanendra Mohun Tagore, the only son of Prasanna Kumar Tagore, and many other youths of respectable Bengali families. The age was aptly described by a writer of the times as on in which the educated Bengali youths distinguished themselves by "cutting their way through ham and beef and wading their way to liberalism through tumblers of beer."

In the midst of these stirring times, Keshub Chunder Sen was born. I need not dwell upon the incidents of his early life, which have been narrated by many writers, but one thing I desire particularly to touch upon. In his short biographical sketch of Keshub Chunder Sen in the Appendix to the life of Ramtanu Lahiri, Sir Roper Lethbridge has narrated the following incident: "He (Keshub) was caught using unfair means to pass one of his college examinations, and turned out. He had been all along quiet and well-behaved, and great was his shame and bitter his grief at the occurrence. He forsook his former companions, repented on his folly, and spent much of his time in prayer and meditation." I wish to say at once that this is a libel on the memory of the good departed man. Keshub and myself lived under the same roof. None of our family heard of the incident as it has been related. *What actually happened was this: when Keshub was sitting at the examination,*



one of the boys near him spoke to him. Keshub who was naturally polite and affable, replied to his fellow-student, with the result that both of them were sent out of the examination hall. He described the incident to me on his return home, and from what I heard I did not think he was to blame. The statement that this incident had an effect upon Keshub in turning him to prayer and meditation, has been introduced, apparently to embellish the story. As a matter of fact, Keshub from his childhood was of a religious and meditative disposition. Keshub's scholastic career lasted till the age of 20, and all that time he was a devout student of mental and moral philosophy, Sir William Hamilton being one of his favourite authors. Among religious works, he read the Bible, and the discourses and sermons of Dr. Chalmers and Theodore Parker. I do not remember all the school-master of Keshub, but Sir Chunder Madhub Ghose was one of them. No two boys were more intimate with each other than Keshub and Chunder Madhub. Keshub came in contact with many Christian Missionaries, and long were the discussions which he often held with them. It is remarkable, however, that although Keshub was of an intensely religious temperament, he was uncertain for sometimes what religion he should follow. He seemed all the same to be preparing himself for his future life under the unseen guidance of Heaven. He was full of original ideas, and none knew better how to give them a practical shape. He started a multitude of classes, clubs and organisations of all sorts for moral and mental improvement. His conversion to Brahmoism was effected as if by a miracle, and I cannot do better than explain it in his own words: "When I felt that I wanted a church, I found that the existing sects and churches would not answer my purpose. A small publication of the

Calcutta Brahmo Somaj fell into my hands, and as I read the chapter on 'What is Brahmoism,' found that it corresponded exactly with the inner conviction of my heart, the voice of God in the soul. I always felt that every outward book must be subordinated to the teachings of the Inner Spirit—that where God speaks through the Spirit in man, all earthly teachers must be silent, and man must bow down and accept in reverence what is thus revealed in the soul. I at once determined that I would join the Brahmo Somaj or Indian Theistic Church." Thenceforth, Keshub's life was full of moral and religious propaganda of Keshub; nor did he ever take advantage of our relationship and close intimacy to force his religious views upon me. I identified myself, however, with social and moral movements. He was recognised as our leader in these matters, and we followed him with implicit faith. He spread his moral influence all around us, and my life was very much influenced by my association with him. I need only incidentally allude here to the irony of fate which called Keshub to a clerk's stool on Rs. 25 a month in the Bank of Bengal—a stepping-stone no doubt to a future high position in an establishment on which our grandfather, Ramkamal Sen, was Dewan. But God fixed Keshub's vocation, and he abandoned the prospects of the world to dedicate himself to the service of the Motherland.

It is this period, during which Keshub laboured for his countrymen, that may be fitly described as having ushered the first national awakening of India. It was necessary that a man like Keshub should rise and combat the sceptical spirit of the age. He was the first man after Raja Ram Mohun Roy to stand forth as the apostle of morality, religion and social reform. I do not wish to say anything about the

tenets of Brahmoism which Keshub preached, but this I wish to point out that it accomplished a great work in stemming the tide of intemperance and immorality, and fanning into flame of dying embers of Hindu spirituality among the educated men of Bengal. Before the rise of Brahmoism, conversion to Christianity was a matter of common occurrence among the English-educated young men, not because Christianity actually satisfied their religious craving, but because it claimed for them immunity from the restraints of Hindu orthodoxy, mostly in the matter of eating and living up to the modern standard. Keshub was associated with Debendro Nath Tagore for some years in propagating the doctrines of Theism. His great eloquence and his ardent enthusiasm made recruit to his faith by hundreds. Keshub threw himself heart and soul into the work of social reform. He collected a multitude of valuable medical opinions on the evils of early marriage, and did yeoman service to the cause of widow-marriage by staging a drama, called "Bidhaba Bibaha Natak." His eloquence arrested alone the progress of Christian conversions. He spoke and wrote incessantly against the evil of godless education, and created a religious yearning in the hearts of many who had hitherto remained sceptical. He founded Bands of Hopes resembling the Temperance Societies of the present day, which bound hundreds of youths to pure moral lives. Youths in those days were brought up to scorn idolatry, but without a suitable substitute, they drifted into atheism. Keshub altered the condition of thing by his incessant writing and preaching. He established the "Sangat Sava" with the object of holding religious discussions. He was pre-eminently the man to convince others by his personal example. He boldly took a voyage to Ceylon with Debendro Nath Tagore, against the wish of his

relatives who object to it on the ground that he might be required to eat forbidden food.

In 1861 Keshub took a step which considerably influenced my own career. It was the starting of the *Indian Mirror* as a fortnightly journal, in conjunction with some friends prominent among whom was the late Manomohan Ghose, the eminent Barrister. I was the Chief Editor of the *Mirror* when it was for a number of years the organ of the Brahmo Somaj. It was upon his return from England that Keshub having seen the power of the daily press in that country, conceived and carried out the idea of converting the *Mirror* into daily journal from a weekly which it then was. Though connected with the *Mirror* since its inception, I was however, no blind partisan of Keshub, and I must own with gratitude that Keshub himself never interfered with my freedom as Editor of the paper. I must confess also that I took my first lessons in public spirit, loyalty and moderation from Keshub. The *Indian Mirror* so far back as 1861 was commended in all quarters for its sobriety and moderation. Captain Francis Palmer, the eldest son of John Palmer, the merchant-prince whose statue adorn the Calcutta Town Hall, was a veteran journalist and educationist of the time. He was my honoured tutor for some years, and under him, I served my journalistic apprenticeship. My revered tutor, whose name is as familiar to-day as that of the great literary giant, Captain D. L. Richardson always impressed upon my young mind one great truth which I have endeavoured ever since to make the ruling principle of my life, and that is that while the aim and end of true journalism is to uphold the cause of justice and righteousness, that cause is best served by sober reason and temperate language. I have already said that Keshub never interfered with my work as Editor of the *Mirror*, a striking instance of

which I remember up to this day. I had criticised some measures of the then Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Sir Richard Temple, somewhat severely in the *Mirror*. Keshub happened to meet Sir Richard Temple afterwards when the latter said somewhat angrily that he would not invite me to Belvedere. Keshub merely mentioned this matter to me, and laughed over it. In the prospectus of the *Indian Mirror* when it was started, it was stated that the *Mirror* would begin with honesty, go on with honesty and end with honesty. It is for the public to judge whether or not the *Mirror* has kept up its traditional policy.

One of the notable reforms to which Keshub lent his powerful support was the Native Marriage Act, passed by the Supreme Legislative Council on the 19th March, 1872. The *Indian Mirror* gave its unqualified support to this measure. Before the introduction of the measure in Council, Keshub met the Viceroy, Lord Lawrence, by appointment at Bankipur, and convinced him of the necessity of the proposed legislation. It is impossible to over-estimate the good which has been derived from this measure. It has made bigamy and polygamy impossible among the members of the Brahmo Somaj, has put a stop to early marriage, has done away with idolatrous rituals, and has legalised inter-marriages and widow-marriages as a matter of course.

That no man is a prophet in his own home was strikingly illustrated in the case of Keshub. Though his eloquence and self-sacrificing mission drew around him myriads of faithful admirers, yet it was not until he undertook his missionary expeditions to Bombay, Madras and other parts of India that his greatness was fully recognised by the Indian public. Keshub himself was astonished with the results of his missionary expeditions, and in one of his letters told

me that after having vegetated in Bengal, he at last met with his reward. A greater triumph awaited him in England. Keshub went to England, as he explained in his first speech in London which was presided over by Lord Lawrence, not for the sake of business or pleasure, not to satisfy idle curiosity or to make money. He went there to convey to the English people the heartfelt thanks of his countrymen for the great work which England had commenced in India, and also to represent India's wants to the British public.

A few words are necessary to describe the condition of political affairs in Keshub's time. It will not be true to say that there was no politics or politician in those days. Keshub himself though a social, moral and religious worker took a keen interest in politics, and so did we all, his contemporaries. But politics at that time was different from what it is to-day. There was no sedition in the land, public questions were discussed with sobriety and dignity, and the utmost cordiality prevailed between the governing and the governed races. The political wants of India were laid by Keshub before the British public with as much zeal and earnestness as her social and moral wants.

The fact is, Keshub first made himself acquainted with all the requirements of Hindu society, and addressed himself to the task of supplying them one by one. As a true patriot and reformer, he knew all the forces that were at work in hindering the progress of Hindu society, and went to overcome them with determined zeal. Who bestows a thought now-a-days on those things which engrossed the time and energy of reformers like Keshub Chunder Sen? Politics is now the rage of the country; social, moral and religious progress is nobody's concern. But even the politics which has become our daily food

is not of the wholesome character as it was in the days I am writing of. Then, as now, there were critics of Government, but they gave praise also where praise was due. Government has its faults no doubt, but are we without our faults? How is it that China and Japan have risen so high in the scale of progress and civilization, while India that first gave them light is so much lagging behind? It is because of the defects of our social system, arising chiefly from the want of moral and religious training among the present generation. There are some among our public men to-day who openly acknowledge having greatly benefited in their early lives by the moral and religious discourses of Keshub Chunder Sen. Who among our public men to-day occupies the place which Keshub filled, as the instructor and exemplar of youth? Keshub saw with a clear eye that India's rise as a nation lay in her moral and religious progress. In one of his tracts, he wrote that, if educated Indians combined religious training with intellectual improvement, they would make more progress than was ever recorded in the history of any nation in the world.

Keshub often said: "My spirit is the spirit of the poor." It was in this spirit that he worked throughout his life. He undertook the most difficult task of weeding out deep-rooted social evils, but in far from a militant spirit. His interests were those of the whole country, of humanity, and his principles founded on the bed-rock of truth and righteousness, stood above sect and party. Thus he had friends among all the prominent men in the Hindu and Mahomedan communities, and also among the officials from the Viceroy downwards. Lord Lawrence and Lord Northbrook were his great friends, and so were two Lieutenant-Governors, Sir George Campbell

and Sir Richard Temple. His popularity, especially among the officials, was well illustrated after his death. At the great meeting held in the Town Hall of Calcutta in honour of his memory, there were present the leading representatives of all sections of the community, European and Indian. The Hon. J. Gibbs, the officiating Governor-General, spoke of Keshub as "a great, a good and an earnest man," who "wished to see his followers good citizens and loyal subjects." "Keshub Chunder Sen," said Sir W. W. Hunter, "represented in a special manner the fusion of European-science with Indian thought. In his efforts to reach the intellects and the consciences of his countrymen, he employed every vehicle of instruction from the ancient Bengal drama to the modern leading article." Mr. Justice Cunningham numbered the deceased "among the benefactors of the species, well entitled to be kept in affectionate remembrance, not only by those whom he immediately influenced, or who accepted his doctrines in their entirety, but by the generation to whose highest and greatest wants he endeavoured to minister." The Anglo Indian Press bore unanimous testimony to the greatness of the departed man. The most eloquent tribute to his memory, however, was paid subsequently, at the University Convocation by the Vice-Chancellor, the Hon. Mr. H. J. Reynolds who concluded his remarks with the following peggant words: "The life of Keshub Chunder Sen is a pledge and an assurance that Providence has yet a great destiny in store for this land. The age and the country which have produced such a man may well look forward with hopeful anticipation to the next scene of the drama in which he played so distinguished a part. But it is not enough merely to wait and to hope. It remains for you, the students of this generation, to follow in his footsteps, to



complete his work, to show yourselves worthy to be called his fellow countrymen."

During his stay in England, Keshub addressed numerous gatherings, and was honoured by the best and highest in the land. He visited Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli (afterwards the Earl of Beaconsfield), and was visited by John Stuart Mill, Professor Newman, Professor Max Muller, and Dean Stanley. He was presented to Her Majesty the Queen and Princess Louise, to whom he gave his wife's photos. The Queen asked for Keshub's own photo and presented him with a large engraving of herself and a copy of each of her "Early Years of the Prince Consort" and "Highland Journal." On account of her regard for Keshub, Her Majesty afterwards graciously became godmother of one of Keshub's grandsons, the third son of the Maharaja and Maharani of Cooch Behar. Her Majesty telegraphed her condolence to Keshub's family, through the Viceroy, Lord Ripon, when she heard of Keshub's death.

What is the state of things now? The feeling between the Government and the people is certainly not as frank and cordial to-day as it was in Keshub's time. The people then followed no militant politics, and the Government, therefore, trusted the people.

The first national awakening, as I have said, took place in Keshub Chunder Sen's time which was soon after the Mutiny. Keshub passed away on the 8th January, 1884 and the period which followed, bringing with the Hindu revival, may be called the second awakening in India. Yet another awakening followed in the industrial revival which was badly needed and was vouchsafed to us by the Providence. Of late the industrial movement has been tainted by boycott attended with political unrest. A little reflection, however, will shew that each of the

awakenings I have mentioned, is a direct outcome of English education. The first awakening under Keshub was attended with beneficent results, because it was leavened with religion. The godless education of the present age and the absence of religious and moral training of any kind whatever, are responsible for the anarchical movement in the land. The days in which Keshub lived were the halcyon days of Bengal. Well may it be exclaimed in the words of Wordsworth, slightly varied—

Keshub, thou should'st be living at this hour;

India hath need of thee.

It may be asked, what constituted Keshub's success as a preacher and reformer? No one had greater opportunity of watching Keshub's early life, as also his career in manhood as myself, and I can at once say that it was his enthusiasm. The word 'failure' was not in Keshub's vocabulary. He gave his whole heart to the cause of humanity, no matter what were the forces arrayed against him. He was the idol of Bengali youths, and he guided them aright. The extension of education, the advocacy of temperance, the discouragement of child-marriage, the emancipation of Hindu widow—these were among the great works to which he put his hand, and for which he laboured strenuously and sacrificed himself. He saved India from spiritual decay, and also neutralised the proselytising influence of the Christian Missionaries. So great was his success in the latter work that Dr. Duff was constrained to acknowledge that the Brahmo Somaj had become a power in the land. We may not all agree with Keshub's religious tenets; but we are all bound in fairness to admit that the way for the subsequent Hindu revival was paved by him. It is impossible to over-estimate our obligation to his memory. We are

reaping to-day the fruits of the national awakening the germs of which were sown by him. He pushed India a century ahead during the short span of life that was allotted to him.

As a public speaker Keshub had no equal. He was the first to introduce *extempore* lectures on religious and political subjects. He was also a man of sturdy independence. Sir. Richard Temple offered to make him a Municipal Commissioner and a Justice of the Peace, but he declined the honour; and again when he was offered a medal at the Imperial Assemblage, he excused himself.

Keshub as a boy was of a delicate constitution, and the austerities which he practised in his late life greatly impaired his health. He was a strict vegetarian, and remained so even during his visit to England. He was so engaged in intellectual and spiritual occupations that he took no physical exercise with the result that he overstrained his physical capacity and passed away at the comparatively early age of 46. I was in Madras when the mournfull intelligence was conveyed to me. It has ever been a great regret of my life that I was not present to see the last of my beloved cousin, teacher and leader.

The life of Keshub Chunder Sen is one upon which the Bengalis may ever dwell with pride. It will be an object lesson for all future generations of our race. Keshub was the true type of a Hindu. Though one of the brightest products of English education, he did not forsake any of the Hindu habits. He wore Indian costumes and ate Indian food even after his return from England. His was a life sacrificed for his fellow-countrymen.

The truth of the old philosophical saying that men come with the times, was truly illustrated in the case of Keshub Chunder Sen. That he could accomplish so much good within a short time, is indeed

a wonder to us. Probably it was because his life was to be so short, that he was enabled by the mercy of God to do so much. He had a narrow escape from death on several occasions; once he was seized with a violent attack of Cholera. God, however, spared him each time, because his work was then unfinished. One of the great works which Keshub accomplished was to sow the germs of national awakening in all directions.

"All heroes," says Fichite, "offer up their lives for the race. Everything great and good on which our age rests has been brought by the sacrifices made by the heroes of the past for ideas; and he defines the hero—"Heroes are men who sacrifice life and its enjoyments for the sake of the idea. They enter into a new life-element of spiritual clearness and purity, whereby life in any other form becomes absolutely distasteful to them." Such a man was Keshub Chunder Sen, who toiled on, often amid darkness and gloom, to hew out of others the elements of heat and light. His life-work finished, he passed away with his face upward to the light of heaven. Keshub was a great man because he was a true servant of God, a real benefactor of his race. A man like him is born, says the *Gita*, when his services are required for the world. India is now in sore need of a leader like Keshub to guide the counsels of her people aright, and I have no doubt such a leader will arise within the time of the present generation. Many are the sins that have accumulated on India's head, and none but an *Avatar* can save her from their deadly effects. The political unrest need cause us no surprise; for has it only followed the Jubilee of the Indian Mutiny after the lapse of a cycle? The cyclic law is inexorable. I entertain, however, great hopes of India's future. It has been my lot to see more than one cataclysm pass over India, and it is my

earnest belief that the day will come when India, under the wise guidance of Britain, will rise once more as one of the great nations of the world. The future, however, as Lord Minto has said, lies in our own hands. India that has been hallowed by the presence of the great *Avatars* of old—that is the birth-place of the world-saviour, Lord Buddha, and that has produced such great men as Ram Mohun Roy, Iswar Chunder Vidysagar, Devendro Nath Tagore and Keshub Chunder Sen cannot suffer long.

How much we all wish that we had at this moment a leader like Keshub Chnder Sen to give a new turn to the thought of those who have brought about the present unrest? Leaders we have by the score, but they are all too busy with politics, to the neglect of the higher things of religion and morals which can alone guide our nationalism in the right channel. Keshub realised the truth that it is the All-Wise and All-Merciful God that has united England and India together in the inscrutable economy of His providence. He realised also that unless a nation rises itself socially, morally and spiritually, it has no chance to rise to greatness. Let the present-day political thinkers pay heed to these cardinal truths. I have seen various changes in India during my public life extending over nearly half-a century; and each day has strengthened my belief that unless my countrymen fit themselves as a nation in every respect, they cannot attain their goal of national greatness. We must learn to govern ourselves, morally and spiritually, to fit ourselves for political self-government on a large scale. This is the message which, for a quarter of a century, Keshub delivered to India. His clear soul, above the smoke and din of the unrest which now pervades the land, lifts us to the empyrean, and inspires us with bright hopes of our country's future. To-day is the anniversary

of Keshub's migration to the happier world from where he gives his benediction to us. Let us not mourn but rejoice that—

“—His life has flow'd

From its mysterious urn a sacred stream,  
In whose calm depth the beautiful and pure,  
Alone are mirror'd ; though shapes of ill,  
May hover round its surface, glides in light,  
And takes no shadow from them.”

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A BRIEF REMINISCENCE  
OF  
KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

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BY MISS M. PIGOT

IN recalling the days of valued happy friendship with Keshub Chunder Sen, one of the most eventful incidents of his life was the occasion of the marriage of his eldest daughter, Sunity Devi, with the minor Maharaja of Cooh Behar. To appreciate his position in it, a brief retrospect is wanted of his mind and the minds of the people that were with him.

From early youth he gave his heart to God and he sought to impress the same devotional spirit upon the numerous lads of the joint family home. In this preparation came to him the spirit of a prophet to inspire his whole countrymen. His work rests on no creed, and whether Brahmoism for which he toiled and in which he suffered will avail the people of India, his one true purpose was to call upon man to worship the one great and only God, and in holy obedience to regulate their lives to His

blessed will, of which he was an unwavering example.

Eclectic in his doctrine, his religion was all embracing. In his Hindu heritage, he chose the purest channels of the religion of the land; and in due course joined Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore, founder of the Adi Somaj. Thence he instituted the Brahmo Somaj of India which he afterwards designated The New Dispensation.

His English education gave another direction to his thoughts and in his connection with the Presidency College he was led to join a class to which the Rev. W. Burns, Chaplain to Bishop Wilson, invited the students. That scholarly clergyman left a life impression on Keshub Chander Sen, so that in the largest measure he drew his inspiration from the Bible. Many of the ordinances of its creed were held by him in substance or in modified form. Thus he held his mind free to know all the things of God, forming his views intermingling in Vedas and the Bible, holding all in common with his doctrine. His writings bear this out, particularly his exposition of "Yoga" and his "Essays, Theological and Ethical." And these show best the nature of his mind and practise, a few extracts are necessary. He evolved a "Trinity Yoga":—

1. Vedic : communion with God, knowledge of nature or nature-theology.
2. Vedantic : communion with God in the soul : self-abnegation.
3. Puranic : communion with God in Providence : *bhakti*.

"Here Hindu theology has a wonderful family likeness to the Christian Trinity—difference only in development. In Christianity we have the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; in Hinduism we have the Father, the Holy Spirit and then the Son.

“Yoga is communion, which the Rishis attained through each department of nature, which was neither pantheism nor polytheism, for they stopped not at dead material force like Huxleys and Tyndalls, but went further and reached the Temple of Living Personal Force. This was the Case with Moses in the burning bush, it was a pure Yoga vision by which he saw his Spirit-God ablaze in the burning bush. Coming down to the New Testament we find another remarkable instance of spiritual vision. When Jesus came out of the waters of Jordan in which he was baptised, He beheld a strange transfiguration. The sky above threw off its material veil and the effulgence of heaven shone forth; and the dove became spiritualised and so transparent that Christ saw in it, and through it, the person of the Holy Ghost as a blazing personal Divinity to which only the Son of God was equal. The Son of God was a transcendental spiritualist, a Yogi of Yogis. This abiding union is life eternal.”

In his “Essays, Theological and Ethical,” Chaitanya is thus mentioned:—“Three principles constitute the corner—stone of his creed—the equality of all castes before God, salvation through grace, and faith or *bhakti*. His followers learnt to repose their firmest faith in God and resign the morrow into the hands of Providence; discarding worldly luxuries, they lived on the bare necessities of life, and made the nearest approach to the ethics of Jesus of Nazareth. Should India act upon these principles she will unconsciously imbibe the regenerating spirit of the Gospel and in a national manner realize the Kingdom of Heaven ”

The Spirit of Christ give more definitely his aspirations; he writes:—“Our business is with the spiritual, universal and living Christ. The Son of God



“is needful for our salvation;—the spirit He embodied,—the spirit of faith, love, righteousness and sacrifice. He is to live in us perpetually as the spirit of godliness. We do care to assimilate the spirit of Christ to our souls. We must eat the flesh and drink the blood of the spiritual Christ; and thus incorporate into our spiritual constitution the principles of faith and sacrifice, love and obedience which He embodied.”

Upon “The Apostolic Missionary” he quotes the Gospel of St. Mathew, Chapter X, saying the “memorable words in which Christ sent forth His apostles to preach the Kingdom of God—such is our ideal of a missionary. It is, we believe, substantially the same which was inculcated by Christ. Self-denial forms the essence of His teaching.”

Upon this he framed his theistic propaganda. In all the simplicity of a child, he sought divine teaching, and in the fervour of a prophet, he spoke to man. Prayer was his essential creed, unmistakably evident to eye-witnesses who watched his countenance as he bowed in solemn worship. Sometimes filled with the greatness of the Divine Presence, then frenzied with the joy of a more abundant entrance, his whole life and work was the very attitude of prayer; he prayed without ceasing; and in all things he said or did, he sought to be guided by God alone.

This but faintly expresses his inner motives. Before the outer world he was a most impressive personage. Stalwart, of striking appearance and handsome countenance, the spiritual mind illuminating his face, all these had a powerful effect on his brilliant oratory. A genius in speech, the spirit of holiness, added to his characteristic personal magnetism, constituted a power far-reaching beyond his

immediate surroundings. Thousands regarded him as a great teacher that had arisen. The Government and men in authority saw in him a force of great good to the country, and took counsel of him in some weighty questions. By his initiation, they instituted the Marriage Act, limiting the ages of men and women to 18 and 14, respectively. Registration in Brahmo Marriage was enacted to give it effect with the recognised religions of the country. At every stage his labours increased. Much affected for the welfare of his people, he went to England to plead for their improvement, that hand-in-hand England and India might strive in every material good for a higher order of life.

He was most loyal to England for the benefits of British rule, knowing the darkness from which the country had been emerging, and the philanthropy that moved the hearts of the people and took its best emotions from the great heart of England's Queen Victoria. On his arrival in England, the whole royal house received him; the great Queen honoured him in a sympathetic conference on all that concerned India and its beloved people, making a presentation to him of her Autobiography inscribed in her own writing. Thus he toured over England, the delegate of the throne and his own countrymen, widely warming hearts in the interests of India. The most eminent gave him respectful welcome, and thousands listened to his speeches in rapt admiration. He took note of the social and moral life of England with its varied philanthropic schemes. Full of honour and with many fresh ideas, he returned to India bringing back increased fervour for greater devotion in the service of his country. Indians, impressed more strongly, welcomed him with a public reception, and he grew in general esteem. Holkar and other chiefs rallied round him, and men of all

gates looked up to him. His labours took a wide range. In philanthropy, the cause of Temperance stood foremost, as indulgence in drink had been getting widespread.

The incitement from new education found no outlet. There did not exist that social life and methods of recreation which give happier direction to the leisure of Western nations, and that dread scourge which gets into the vacant hours of the whole human family, began to do dire work ; drunkenness leading men to the worst vices, slaying some of the most distinguished careers. Men of brilliant judicial acumen, professors with profundity of learning, the most promising scholars, and members of the highest distinction fell victims to this soul and body destroyer. He pressed upon all the pledge of temperance, and to nip it in the bud, he instituted a Band of Hope for lads and young men, the blue ribbon of England.

In the advancement of women he made personal efforts. For girls and adults he keenly advocated higher education, eliminating the more robust subjects of the University, he desired the highest standard of literary culture and all branches that would refine and most elevate the mind of women. in order to become an intelligent and more spiritual agency in exalting their race. Further he established an institution, where whole families boarded for better plans of family. Regular forms of worship were taught to women, with meditation on the reading of the Vedas. At midday, they were instructed to study the Bible. They shared in public services, where a screen gave their modest habits the necessary privacy and protection.

In the early dawn, Hindu women were stringently restricted ; only the serfs of the land and the offscouring among them had the right to appear

in public. Few women were willing to accept freedom and men were bitter opponents to it, and themselves constrained to seek aid in any slightly public adventure. Upon many occasions he availed himself of a lady missionary friend to chaperon with him for their encouragement and protection. Among several small sights, they were shown some leading Girls' Schools for English and Indian children having their attention directed to the orderly arrangements carried out. Their curiosity was great to know something of the Fort, so through the kind offices of a military friend they were driven under very private arrangements through some parts of it, and the men ordered out of the Arsenal enabled the women to look strangely at all the weapons of carnage. Step by step he brought them to daylight, with no small struggle and the dread of insult to them. As a case in point, St. Andrew's Kirk was giving its annual Sunday School picnic at the Botanical Gardens by steamer, in which parents and workers joined. A lady friend requested Keshub Chunder Sen to bring Brahmo ladies to it. He did so, and they passed the time happily in this company, but as food was as yet unacceptable to them, they went for it to the house of an employee friend of the garden. When the time for returning home arrived and the steamer was ready to start, the Indian ladies grouped themselves in great consternation endeavouring to hide among thick trees. Keshub Chunder Sen had in vain been urging them to proceed, and when the lady friend approached, he pointed to a small party of Bengalis who had offensively stood in their way. The lady immediately confronted them and bade them know that these ladies had come in the company of two hundred British people who had rendered them all due honour. She told them that

they must have recognised Keshub Chunder Sen and should have understood the respectability of the Indian ladies, but they had insulted honourable women instead of being the protectors of their countrywomen. Upon this the men stood with lowered heads until she turned away and then they quickly disappeared. Many Brahmo ladies and others remember the time when Keshub Chunder Sen withstood every difficulty on their behalf, and honour him as a parent to them for their present-day of great liberty.

In yet wider influence for doing good, he started newspapers of sound politics and healthy views for the classes and masses. His religious undertakings bulked more largely. Besides lectures to the general public, he held long hours of service in the Mandir, gathering others more closely to him for prayer in his own house. Readily accessible, numbers sought him in esteem and for instruction with whom he conversed late into the night. Thus he drew a very heterogenous community around him. It had been a period of chaos to thinking minds in the regions of religion. Increasing numbers had gone to England for education and nomination to higher services of the State. No mixed multitude were of this category, as in the present day. Only the most capable were equal to the difficulties in the initial stage, and men of the highest distinction had thus come to the front. Westernised also to a large degree their views were widely altered from the old ways. A very considerable number had also been changing their mode of thought under the influence of English education and science teaching, scoffing at the old idolatrous forms of Hinduism. These various minds took diverging shapes formed most naturally from their own environment. Men of wealth, men of learning, men holding

positions of trust and power, felt the spirit of leadership in themselves. But Keshub Chunder Sen stood high above all, holding men's hearts, evolving high spiritual thoughts. They accepted him, but could not in all respects imitate this saint in the attitude of their lives, nor could they give direction to this voluntary servant of God, who asked no office or favour or financial aid at the hands of man. Being men of action themselves, they set on foot an agitation, which had been working in the midst of the Brahmo community to form an organization which they could unfold and mark out for themselves. At this culminating point occurred the marriage of Keshub Chunder Sen's daughter with Maharaja of Cooch Behar, which gave them a handle to take the action they had long desired. A rupture took place forming the party called the Sadharan Brahmos. This event in the new theism was only typical of the varying views, and in no way detracts from the great work of the Reformer. Brahmos, however divergent, will regard Keshub Chunder Sen as their pioneer, as first stepping out of the trammels of Hinduism, discarding his sacred thread and holding all castes to be brethren; then softly from the teaching of the Vedas, boldly opening their minds to learn from the great creeds of the nations. It was a period when fathers disinherited their sons and drove them out of their homes for being converted to Christianity. The Bible was rejected as deadly poison and dire wrath fell upon all who read it. The present age has outgrown the rank prejudice, and there are few cultured men now who do not take inspiration from the Bible, which has ennobled many lives, and, to quote Keshub Chunder Sen, "it was that which took its birth in the East and going West changed the wild nations of Europe, turning lions into lambs." Be it said to those who

love the Bible, that we owe much to Keshub Chunder Sen making it an open book to India in the inspiring value he set upon its teachings.

His force of character was visible on every hand and it was as full of force in the eventful Cooch Behar marriage, intended to be recorded by the writer who participated in the arrangements and was an eye-witness to all the occurrences. At this period Keshub Chunder Sen had reached the zenith of his great popularity, and simultaneously it was becoming a State requirement that a Maharani should be installed in the Independent Territory of Cooch Behar. His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar had been a ward of the Government from his infant years, and was still a minor when the authorities desired he should visit England and become acquainted with the ways of European rule, before assuming the reins of his own Government. In such case the widowed Maharani mother stipulated he should be given in marriage before his departure. Accordingly Mr. Jadob Chunder Chuckerbutty, Magistrate of Cooch Behar, was deputed to make inquiry for eligible maidens worthy to be such a bride. From far and wide many were recommended, but none proved fully satisfactory, until a daughter of the house of Keshub Chunder Sen was suggested and she was thereafter most eagerly desired. The first overture was most perplexing to Keshub Chunder Sen. Though of good family himself in the delicate feelings of gentry blood, he shrank from an alliance with great worldly wealth and position so exalted. He had himself declined good prospects for the unpaid spiritual work he conducted being content to live on his patrimony; so he unhesitatingly declared the income of a Maharaja to be incompatible with his means. Other fears, too, filled his mind. The backwardness

of Indian States was notorious, intrigue and wild discord were reported to prevail in them, and life itself was endangered in this imbroglio of evil men and amid the many jealousies of the female household. It was, therefore, a foregone conclusion the marriage offer could not be accepted. But friends urged him to consider it as a divine appointment for the good of Cooch Behar. Soon the Deputy Commissioner of the State came personally to confer with him, urging the matter in the interest of the Maharaja for whose welfare the Government was most solicitous. The young chief's superior education and exalted character gave every assurance of his good rule, and in the English view a Maharani of suitable status was their hope for the future, which a daughter from him would best fulfil. In giving the offer his real consideration, insuperable difficulties presented themselves to him. Neither the Maharaja nor the bride elect had attained the full age required by the Marriage Act, and more serious still he would be required to accept a Hindu marriage in all its idolatrous aspect. Mr. Dalton expressed himself ready and prepared to obviate both points of objection by measures that would be taken. As affecting the age of the parties, he said, the ceremony was purely to satisfy the Mother of the Maharaja and his future subjects. Government purposed it should be virtually a betrothal, the bride, who wanted but six months of the age limit of the Act, would at once return to her home, where she would be maintained by her rights upon the State; and it would be arranged that the Maharaja should immediately start for England, so that the marriage would in reality be consummated when both had passed the prescribed age. It was a State expediency and involved no breach in the true purpose of the law. The Deputy Commissioner



thought the marriage rites could be more easily arranged, as the Maharaja himself held theistic views, and a non-idolatrous marriage service would be more acceptable to him. The Britisher holding to the rights of conscience, regarded it as settled and none would gainsay their chief's wishes; but as it happened later he had counted without his host. It was found that the Registration Act, required in Brahmo marriages, would be ineffective in an Independent Territory. Ceremonies, however, had not yet been framed for the Brahmos, and no fixed marriage rite had been adopted. Successive marriages had varied in form according to the desire of contracting parties. Keshub Chunder Sen had himself been married by Hindu rites at the understanding age of 18 years; and for centuries it had been the code of the nation from his far-off ancestors. It permeated his life blood, and in the force of the heredity, it would not militate against his feelings to maintain national rites if shorn of their idolatrous features. Thus it was settled, a Cooch Behar priest would come and give an undertaking that the *mantras* would be delivered in the name of God, eschewing all idol names; and as for the sacrificial fire, incumbent for legalization, it would be performed after the Maharani left the marriage enclosure. Further Keshub Chunder Sen was told, a splendid palace was to be built in Cooch Behar, and superior arrangements provided for the Maharani. All the female members of the old household were desirous to end their days in the sacred city of Benares, where provision was being made for them. Only the dewager Maharani would be in residence, and a perfectly new order of things prevail. Nothing to be desired would thus be left undone.

All objections being so readily over-ruled and his fears being happily dispersed, he was convinced,

the hand of God had removed all difficulties, and the marriage was felt by him to be a divine command, to which he now yielded in humble obedience. He then requested the Deputy Commissioner to see his daughter and judge her suitability to be fully satisfied himself. The ancestral home, where she then resided, capacious in nearly one hundred apartments, where often one hundred and fifty members of the joint family resided, was felt to be too disconcerting a place for the ordeal of a young girl suffering herself to be inspected. It was accordingly arranged she should meet him in the Scotch Mission house where she took lessons. Thus in all the naivete of girl innocence, she entered the room where Mr. Dalton awaited her.

He asked her to show her lesson books, she read from her English literature and played a piece on the piano to his satisfaction. At 13 years of age Indian girls are as attractive as the sweet 17 of Europe. Slight, in her graceful form, the contour of her delicate features perfect, and the tenderness of her lustrous eyes looking up to him in trustful confidence, she captured the heart of Mr. Dalton, making him her gallant champion in all that followed.

Duly the Cooch Behar priest arrived and acceded to the marriage rites upon the terms required. Subsequently the young Maharaja made the acquaintance of the family, whose great charm vanquished all hearts while Keshub hunder Sen and he became ardent lovers of each other. The occasion was sealed and hallowed by prayer, and the usual bridal gifts made. All went happily, but the course of true love never did run smooth. A perfect furore arose against the Brahmo leader, virulent abuse was hurled on him, denouncing his greed for wealth and blaming him for violating the Marriage

Act. Protests were made by word and writing, and in the midst of this vituperation, the bridal party took its way by special train for the wedding day on 6th March, 1878. Alighting at Huldee Baree, after two days' rough travelling by palanquin and elephants, Cooch Behar was reached late in a dark night, with no signs of preparation awaiting them, and darkness only visible every where. At last two small houses were found intended for them, and a tent for the alien companion of the party. The State Dewan came later to offer his welcome and the sky remained clear. Meanwhile preliminary incidents to the marriage were observed. On a set day the Dewan came in State with his band of officers. The bride most effectively attired, seated on a carpet, received each with graceful dignity, accepting the preferred gold coin, as to the manner born.

Another demonstration was a local institution. An array of female domestics arrived bringing a **curry** stone and *muller* with certain pulse. The bride's hands were held over this, to instruct her in certain culinary preparations. The gentlemen of the party also had their gala day of ablutions in a tank, making merriment, swimming and splashing and besmearing each other with colored powder. The crucial days now arrived. The evening before the wedding day Keshub Chunder Sen took a friend and drove to see the marriage preparations. He was seen and called into an inner room of the Rajbaree, where he found a strong conclave gathered in stern counsel which determined that the morrow's ceremony should be in strict observance of all Hindu rites. Keshub Chunder Sen struck dumb and with pale countenance came and bade his friend depart, as there was trouble at hand. With iron will he held his ground. They at length dispersed, nothing being

done to destroy the undertaking given by the Deputy Commissioner and the representative priests of Cooch Behar of a non-Hindu marriage. Secure in the guarantee Keshub Chunder Sen returned from the conference at a late hour. According to custom the night before the marriage the bride had to be conveyed to the palace. In the darkest of nights came such a rabble of yelling women with a hubbub of men bearing palanquins, holding a stray torch here and there which gave weird flashes that proved most depressing in its effect, causing our hearts to sink. Keshub Chunder Sen deeply moved called the family together for prayer to the verandah facing this assemblage. All bowed their heads to the earth, while the agonised heart of the father cried out, beseeching God to look upon his child. It was He who had given her, and he prayed Him to take her back, henceforth to be entirely His own. In ever increasing insistence he reiterated the prayer for the Heavenly Father to hold her, to keep her, and to do His whole will by her. In very oblation he laid his daughter upon the divine altar. Earth vanished, heaven only in sight, no earthly blessing was sought, no marriage benediction asked, his supreme effort was her dedication. Thus she departed to her future home accompanied by her sister and by her mother and grandmother and several relatives. So far all went well but then the storm broke. Keshub Chunder Sen a theistic iconoclast found himself in a stronghold of Hinduism. He had indeed come under shelter of the British flag, disregarding the Indian element. He had made no endeavour at friendliness or conciliation, and had brought his daughter with only a few dumb companions. On the other hand the people regarded him as announcing dire innovations; desiring that the cherished names of their gods should be discarded;

waging war with religious beliefs, violating, desecrating the creed of the nation and people. Cooch Behar could not be true to itself to permit this havoc upon Hinduism, without a strong display of feeling and without resistance. But they hid their hand until the bride was secured and brought into the Rajbaree. The following morning the chief priest called upon Keshub Chunder Sen supported by the Dewan and others, to inform him the *shalgram* would have to be placed within the marriage enclosure and the sacrificial fire observed in its entirety, also that neither the father nor his attended missionary would be admitted into this sacred area. Much taken a-back by this unexpected move, Keshub Chunder Sen said, this could not be. Why was it not told him before? It was explained, without it there could be no true marriage to render his daughter a lawful Maharani. Sharply came the rebuff, "I care not for her to be a Maharani, but there shall be no idolatrous ceremony." After long altercation they departed, both sides remaining obdurate. All this while the bride's lot was hard. It was only to be expected that the female inmates of the palace would be equally keen and devoted to their gods. Many efforts were made to entrap her into some acknowledgment of their idols. At last one touched her with a gold coin, and triumphantly bore it off as *pryschitto*, that she had made atonement. The Raj Mother with more dignity telegraphed to the Lieutenant-Governor: "Keshub Babu's daughter is to be married to my son by anti-Hindu rites destructive to caste and creed; let the Governor take measures it be done by Hindu rites." The matter was referred to the Commissioner, and by him to the Deputy Commissioner, who was placed in a most perplexing position. There had been no hindrance thus far, but at the

critical hour all the Deputy Commissioner's arrangements were thrown into disorder. It was the day fixed for the marriage, and the auspicious hour was soon after sunset. From dawn to night the hours passed into deep gloom. Before this time, men mounted on elevated platforms had been resounding their conch shells in deafening din of mad joy, but all had ceased now. A dead silence prevailed, while Keshub Chunder Sen with closed shutters lay prostrate in prayer. The evening closed, the auspicious hour went by, and all expectations regarding the marriage ended, until midnight, when the rumble of carriage wheels and the tramp of horses broke the stillness. Mr. Dalton came to Keshub Chunder Sen and bade him come at once for the nuptials, as there remained another auspicious hour at 2 A. M., when he would have them celebrated upon the agreed terms of non-idolatrous Hindu form. He said he had given his word to it and would see it carried out, and to emphasise his determination handed him a written undertaking to the same effect. The same night the Lieutenant-Governor telegraphed: "Let the marriage be performed according to the rites as settled before in Calcutta." The Deputy Commissioner hastened ahead and was followed by the bride's friends in barouches, who wended their way with difficulty having to proceed through vast crowds and the confusion of their noisy demonstrations. Bands were found playing English and Indian Music with display of fireworks and the bursting of bombs all along the roads.

The large picturesque structure specially constructed for the marriage was at last reached, and a lady friend was requested to convey the wedding garment and robe the bride. But not being able to gain admission, she stumbled through a dark room into a quadrangle, which was surrounded by

dwelling, from where a woman happened to emerge and proceed to a near well to draw water. Seeing the strange form of the lady she fled shrieking. This happily drew attention and the lady returning to the empty room, laid the box on the floor calling out, "some one come and take the bride's dress," leaving it to chance, she retreated and it was a relief afterwards to see the bride appearing later clad in this wedding robe of rich blue silk embroidered in gold with handsome covering of scarlet—all most lovingly designed by the father and equisitely carried out by a Parisian milliner. She was thus borne, seated on a board, and placed beside the waiting bridegroom. The father deputed his younger brother, Krishna Behari Sen, to bestow the bride, while he sat aside in prayer and fitting devotion. The ceremony was performed according to the agreed terms. The bride was lifted again and conveyed back to the female apartments, while the Maharaja retained his seat until the priest's completed their legalization of the marriage.

When day broke, other celebrations of joy and feasting followed. In the evening the Deputy Commissioner called and took the Maharaja to his house, and on the following day both proceeded to Darjeeling to interview the Commissioner prior to the departure to England. Thence the Maharajah overtook the bride's special train, and the whole party arrived together in Calcutta. On the same night he left for England. The Maharani lived in her father's house, now resident in their lovely villa 78, Upper Circular Road, where she continued her studies. Thus the interval passed until they attained the prescribed age, when a second marriage celebration took place in the Brahmo Mandir. Even yet no marriage ritual being settled, Keshub Chunder Sen borrowed a Book of Common Prayer with the

English marriage service, and from it applied the pledges and vows, which are still retained in some measures by his adherents. Thus while some made an outcry of a Hindu marriage, others might decry its supplement as a Christian one. All, however, bear out the broad-mindedness of the Maharaja. Brahmoism has obtained a conspicuous place in Cooch Behar, and yet all are free to worship in their own belief, while a Christian Mission is settled in its midst.

The marriage has given Cooch Behar the fittest lady suited to the conditions of the present day. Manifesting the spirit of Keshub Chunder Sen in many forms, the Maharani is exemplary to all in her rigid private and public religious observances. Active in all good works, her hand is devotedly outstretched in many efforts of education and the relief of the sick and suffering. With the same earnest purpose she undertakes the constant social duties required of high rank. Adorning all functions with a grace and charm of manner that well might be the standard of conduct of Indian royalties, and an influence for good to all classes, her gracious personality will long remain in heritage of India, exemplifying the woman's life inculcated by the great father in India's best womanhood.

To go back to the story of the return to Calcutta, Keshub Chunder Sen arrived to find a large body alienated from him, led by some of his best and noblest friends. In the heat of strong controversy, excitement rises to a high pitch; and when numbers combine, matters take rapid growth, assuming huge dimensions. When men hold to their exaggerated point with determination their prestige and purpose drive them to the bitter end. A fierce demonstration pursued Keshub Chunder Sen. By vehement invectives and in most untempered language



he was commanded to go out of the ministry. The Mandir was to be taken from him. Explanations they refused to hear. In all this *melee* Keshub Chunder Sen called them to assemble for his resignation, but they scorned the term 'resignation' for no quarter was to be given. They had determined on his degradation—they had deposed him! Leaflets were scattered broadcast defaming him, and disgraceful libellous drama had been prepared of most malignant tone, which, however, they were forced to suppress. Many forms of violence followed in which even Hindus were stirred to join. But Keshub Chunder Sen's only response to all was:—  
 "I became a Brahmo when I heard the divine call, and I have given this marriage by the same divine command; I obey God and not man." The separation took place, but from whatever motive, the fact stands that men did it to follow the bent of their own minds with the purpose to organise for themselves. Humanity thus ever acts, when there should not be antagonism. The generation that were the actors have nearly all passed away, and time will have mellowed those events to the aged survivors; but the new generation viewing the past in the light of history, will not refuse the crown of martyrdom to the sufferings and death of Keshub Chunder Sen.

It is in the course of human events that by some tragic incident the truest and best men are brought to the slaughter. This was pathetically the case in the present instance. The outrage upon his devoted spirit, which he had surrendered to the service of India, wrought his fatal illness, which hastened his death in but four years. But let his memorial be raised upon every Indian soul, to become like him, to search the Scriptures and in his singleness of heart obey God!

A LETTER FROM ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.

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BY REV. GEORGE BATCHELOR EDITOR "THE  
CHRISTIAN REGISTER," BOSTON.  
*January 10, 1909.*

DEAR SIR.

When your kind letter with the accompanying books came to Boston, I was lying in the hospital recovering from a very dangerous attack of appendicitis. The time is approaching when you would need the article which you were kind enough to ask me to write. I feel honored by your invitation, but because of the pressure of work that is coming upon me after my long absence from my office, I must offer an excuse, and simply acknowledge your kindness with an expression of my own interest and sympathy in the cause that you represent, of which Keshub Chunder Sen was such an illustrious advocate and exponent. I have not been ignorant of the development of the Brahmo Somaj. When that great man, the Rajah Ram Mohun Roy began his study of Christianity, the Hon. Robert Ramtoul of Beverly, Mass., opened a correspondence with him and introduced him to the knowledge of Unitarians in Salem, Boston and vicinity. Afterward, from the library one of our older ministers, Rev. John L. Russell, there came to me a volume of his works with his portrait which I have always greatly prized. When Chunder Sen rose above our horizon, a new star in the East, I was among those who hailed his coming as one of the prophets of a new dispensation,—a dispensation not peculiar to any race, to any church, to any form of religion, but a dispensation of the spirit, of the true light which

lighteth every man that cometh into the world. It has been a disappointment to me that the light has not spread more rapidly, and that the living truth represented by your movement has not been more effective in working reform in India, and in revealing the attributes of divine life.

This disappointment, however, is only like that which we have felt in England and America as we have been baffled in our efforts to make our Unitarian cause effective in the regeneration of the people and the renewal of faith in the church. But we do not despair, and we share with you the hope that some day that revelation of truth which has come to us through the life and teachings of Jesus will be accepted to all men and will displace the artificial creeds which have become hindrances, and not aids to faith.

Accept my greetings and the assurance of my confident belief that we represent a winning cause and that, whether in India or America, we are working in the same harvest field with the same hopes and the same certainty of final success.

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## A REMINISCENCE OF 1870.

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BY MR. ION PRICHARD, SECRETARY, BRITISH  
AND FOREIGN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,  
SUNDAY SCHOOLS LONDON.

*January 10, 1909.*

I HAVE your letter of the 20th August asking me to give you my personal impressions of the teachings and writings of the Teacher and Reformer Keshub Chunder Sen. I can only speak of my remembrances

of his mission in England in 1870, although of course reports of his works and sayings have reached me from time to time through the papers.

I think that Mr. Sen's visit to England must have been the most stirring and most active time of his life. He was five months here from April to September and during this time was engaged in speaking in almost all the large cities of England and Scotland, sometimes to very large audiences. In Glasgow it was said that over 4000 were present at one of his meetings and at the time the newspapers said that no Indian speaker had been better received and listened to. The subjects of Mr. Sen's addresses were practically two. The spiritual ideas underlying the faith of the Brahmo Samaj; and secondly—a demand on the British nation to help to promote education among the peoples of India.

The preacher was quite at home with the Unitarians, attended their meetings, preached in their churches and spoke at their Sunday schools, but he objected to the name Unitarian and would not in those days at all events, identify himself with it. The orthodox churches invited him to preach from their pulpits and although here his belief differed very widely from that of his audiences the services he conducted and his addresses were reverently listened to and sincerely appreciated. That he had made many friends in the religious world among people differing greatly from him was shown by the fact that a written address was presented to him on his leaving England signed by some 40 clergymen and ministers of the orthodox churches.

A vivid memory picture I had of a visit, Mr. Sen paid to our Sunday School at Stoke Newington-green, although nearly forty years have gone by. It was one afternoon the visitor came to our little church and was invited by the superintendent to

speak to the children. In those days an Indian visitor was more of a novelty than he would be now and the children gazed in wonder at the new comer. Mr. Sen quite understood the sensation his appearance caused and commenced to speak on the differences that existed between men of various nations. He spoke of colour, dress, language, climate, all different, but that in spite of all these differences there as one thing all were agreed upon, that was the value of truth. Mr. Sen then gave a little talk on the subject and closed with a few words of good will to the scholars.

If all the reformer's addresses were listened to and remembered as well as the one at our school then the influence of his teachings will leave a lasting impression on his disciples and followers.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN IN ENGLAND.

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BY REV. JAMES DRUMMOND, M. A., D. D.,  
LL. D.—OXFORD.

*January 10, 1909.*

IN response to the appeal of the Editor I cannot refuse to send a short notice of the great Indian reformer, Keshub Chunder Sen. I fear indeed that I am ill qualified to do so ; for though I was deeply interested in his visit to England, now nearly forty years ago, and had the greatest admiration and regard for him, I had little opportunity of becoming intimate, and could judge of his interior life only by a few of his public utterances, and by the general impression which he made on those who saw and heard him. He must, I think, have been pleased

with his welcome in England, and have discovered, as others of his countrymen have done since, that, though the members of an imperial race are apt to become imperious in a foreign land, where their position is necessarily difficult and somewhat artificial, the Englishman at home has a warm clasp of the hand of natives of other climes, and though, like other men, subject to impulse and passion, nevertheless wishes to be both just and kind to others. At all events Mr. Sen had a reception such as would be accorded to few men from any country. I remember his addressing a great meeting in one of the large halls in London. Where he was welcomed by people of various sects and parties. According to my recollection, he was tall and strongly built, and without the least assumption or vanity, there was an air of superiority in his impressive face and bearing which made one feel at once that he was no ordinary man. When he stood up to speak he can have had no doubt that he was before a friendly audience, and that the vast assembly listened eagerly to a great oration, delivered with a fluency and power such as few Englishmen could command.

His preaching was what, from my point of view, I should call deeply Christian ; by which I mean that it was full of those qualities of faith and devotion and goodness which we, in the west, associate with the name of Christ. And indeed, though he himself, for reasons which are quite intelligible, would not call himself a Christian, I believe that he had a far deeper appreciation of Jesus and his teaching than multitudes who bear that name. His sermons, so far as I heard them, were not marked by recondite thought or any attempt to be original, but moved the hearers by their simple fervour and the pure spirituality of their tone.

In his private intercourse he was at once attrac-

tive and impressive. His was a winning personality that drew men to him by his sincerity and kindness and the unselfish consecration of his life. I still remember how he took up one of my nephews, then a little boy, in his strong arms, and fondled him with his sweet smile,—a trifling incident in itself, but not without significance as showing his tender and loving nature.

The question has been asked whether he was a prophet. The answer must depend on the meaning which we attach to the term. If, as he maintained, a prophet was one who was all holy within, then there have been few prophets in the world's history, and we must accept his own disclaimer. But if a prophet is one who has had revelations in the depth of his spirit, and has felt himself commanded by the voice of God within him to declare these revelations to his brethren, and under the power of this command has spoken with convincing authority to the souls of others, then Keshub Chunder Sen, though neither intellectually infallible nor without a consciousness of sin, must be placed among the prophets and commemorated with a reverent thankfulness for the message of his life. May his spirit abound more and more in India, and the pure light of his truth and goodness dissipate all cruel misunderstandings between east and west, and gradually bring about a union of two great and diverse peoples in the bonds of brotherhood, held together by faith in the one God and Father of all souls. This is a consummation which, I believe, lay very close to the heart of our departed friend; and I trust that his spirit of peace and good-will will always be cherished by the several branches of the Brahma Somaj; and while in every land we look and labour for wiser laws and juster administration, let us remember that these things can come only through the exercise of

virtue and honour, and that the wrath of man can never work the righteousness of God. May the wise and holy men of the past speak and dwell in our hearts.

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## THE PROPHET AND HIS MESSAGE.

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BY REV. F. W. STEINTHAL, SECY., Y. M. C. A.

*January 10, 1909.*

GOD speaks to the sons of men through his prophets by diverse portions and in diverse manners ; one of his messengers to India was undoubtedly Keshub Chunder Sen. We find in his life the true characteristics of the prophet ; he had a message from God to his people ; he was intensely conscious of the divine truth of his message ; he proclaimed it to the people not by arguments of science or philosophy but in the demonstration of the spirit and of power. The old rule that no prophet is accepted in his own country does not hold good in India ; from Gautama to Keshub Indian prophets have always been sure of a large number of attentive listeners and devoted followers already in their life-time, but few are the chosen ones who have left any lasting impression on the fabric of India's spiritual life when a few generations have dispelled the influence of the living personality. Was Keshub one of the chosen few ?

Like a mighty wave did his religious genius carry a great message with eloquent words and spiritual power all over the land. Indians and foreigners alike listened, charmed and surprised, asking themselves whether the new era of India had already



begun. The vested interest of traditional conservatism rose to opposition ; enthusiastic young followers gathered round him ; it was a tremendous opportunity, the beginning of a great movement. A quarter of a century has passed since the prophet closed his eyes and how different is the aspect that meets us ? The mighty wave has withdrawn broken against the stony ground of the beach, the water no more rolls onward in conquering power but it has found its way into different brooklets and inlets among the stones, in some places stagnating, in others still running with fresh water because of living connection with the sea. The wonderful spell of his impressive personality is no more at work, and his mantle has not fallen upon any of his disciples. Other problems, great political and national questions, have taken hold of the young men's minds and at least for a while absorbed their deeper religious interests. Both factors are true and must be taken into account, and yet one cannot help asking : Was this all, that God meant his servant to accomplish ? Why has Keshub Chunder's prophetic message ceased to move the hearts of his people ?

A prophet will always be a reformer ; but his reforms may not always be those that tickle the ears of the multitude, and he will never be satisfied with being a reformer. Apart from his great master Ram Mohun Roy no single man has perhaps done more to promote social reform than Keshub Chunder did ; not by organisations or institutions, not by books or by laws, but by the reforming power of the spirit that dwelt in him, by his zeal for truth and righteousness, by his unflinching earnestness in demanding that men should live up to their convictions. His spiritual vision of human life in its relation to God and his fellow men could not let him see with complacency the mass of his countrymen

bound in ignorance and superstition, prejudice and caste. It was not his interest in social reform that made him a prophet; his prophetic calling made him a leader of reformers rather than a reformer himself. Have some of his disciples perhaps been too much absorbed by the social reforms and forgotten that without the power of the spirit reforms will only be a new patch on the old garment? Keshub, the prophet, was never guilty of such a mistake.

A prophet's power lies in his message, not in his work; the more his own personality is pervaded by and bears witness to his message, the greater will his influence be. Yet it will always be a danger to place the personality above the message. One cannot but admire the true spiritual discretion expressed in the name given him by his own community: Our Minister. If against his own principles Keshub Chunder ever took any other attitude, if his friends ever give him any other place, they forget that he was a prophet, a messenger of Most High, who like all other prophets pointed away from himself to Him whose message he came to deliver. His ever present consciousness of his duty to God made him fearless of man. There may have been stronger characters, less susceptible to diverse influences but India has had few sons less moved by fear of men, more uncompromising in their enthusiastic fight for what they considered to be true. Whatever may be said of the Cooch Behar marriage, it was not fear of society that made him go against his own principles. There may have been deeper characters; it may be true that the saintly Maharshi Debendra Nath stands nearer the Indian ideal of the perfect saint than Keshub, though that may be because Debendra Nath did not so ruthlessly break with the traditional forms of life and thought. But none could have a more spiritual vision, live a more intensely devotional life

or be more earnest in his optimistic enthusiasm for the new light he had received. He was a faithful messenger, as he understood God's message to him.

What then was Keshub's message? A clear, ringing appeal to his people to shake off the idolatrous superstitions of the past, to break through the priestcraft of the Brahmans, that they might seek and find the living God as their Father and worship him in spirit and truth. The Fatherhood of God and the Protherhood of man were the two keynotes in his message, not as doctrines but as spiritual realities, as the deep fountains from which sprang the quickening, regenerating and uplifting forces of individual as of national life. He found truth in every religion as indeed there is, and he was honest in his recognition of where he found it. Therefore he freely acknowledged Jesus Christ as his master and lord; it was His life and teachings that led him into the deepest religious experiences. When he thought it a false compromise to allow Brahmans who still wore the sacred thread to conduct services in the sanctuary, it was the *Theologia Germanica*, the same book that helped Martin Luther in his spiritual struggle, which became his guide and comfort. He liked to call himself Jesudas, and once when an Australian missionary asked him if it were true that in the New Dispensation he meant to lay another foundation than the one Jesus Christ had laid, he is said to have answered: May the blood curdle in my veins and my tongue cleave to the roof of my palate if ever I should think of laying any other foundation than my master Jesus Christ has done. His admiration and reverence for Jesus was unlimited, and his loving devotion often gave itself expression in words taken from the Christian phraseology, though perhaps used with a different

meaning, what often made it difficult for outsiders to understand what separated him from the Christians. I still remember many years ago when reading a Danish translation of his lecture: India asks who is Christ? how I wondered whether that man was a Christian or not. I believe that I speak the truth when I say that what separated him from the Christians was not that the Christians would not accept him, but that he would not join the Christians. I know that some considered him a Christian, among them my late beloved and revered friend Kali Charan Banurji, who more than once told me, that he firmly believed from Keshub's own utterances, that he died as a convinced Christian. But he was afraid of the western theological garb in which Jesus was presented; it was foreign to him and he felt that it would be foreign to his countrymen. He saw it as his mission to bring India to Christ, and he had seen him, and he never spoke with more wholehearted enthusiasm than when he tried to interpret Christ to India or the Indian conception of Christ to the West. To bring India to the feet of Christ that through Him they might learn to love and worship God as their Father and to love and serve their fellow men as their brethren was the great aim of his life, his prophetic vision, his message to India.

The prophet has died, but his message remains. No prophet is perfect; neither was Keshub Chunder Sen; no one has used stronger words of his own imperfection and sinfulness than he. It is not for us to judge the dead neither to build or garnish the tomb of the prophets. We have a higher duty, to take up his message and let it resound from one end of India to the other till God's voice has been heard and His work accomplished. But where is Keshub's voice heard to day? Would he be satisfied with social reform parties, religious eclecticism or theistic

conferences? It is a strange fact that so many of his followers draw their nourishment from the Unitarian type of Christian thought which places reason above faith, that Keshub never would have admitted. How few have found their way to the much deeper and richer springs of Christian mysticism in its older and newer forms, in many ways so closely akin to the Indian spirit. Is that the reason why the Brahmo preaching has lost its original power, because rational doctrine has taken the place of spiritual life? The National Congress began the year after Keshub's death; shall this be India's final answer to his appeal, that she will seek the kingdom of this world before the Kingdom of God? Who can render any higher service to India to-day than to awaken her religious consciousness and work for her spiritual regeneration? Where are the sons of the prophet, Keshub's true disciples, who will take up his message where his voice was silenced and make the land resound with the master's question: Who is Christ? Some day the answer shall be given in loving obedience and devotion to the God and Father of Jesus Christ, and Keshub's prophetic vision be realised that India shall be the brightest jewel in the crown of Christ.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN AND MODERN SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT.

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BY PROFESSOR D. N. MALLIK, B. A.,  
(CANTAB.), D. SC., (DUBLIN).

*January 10, 1909.*

OF the many-sided genius of Keshub Chunder Sen, I am not in a position to speak: The time has

not come, when an adequate estimate of that genius can be done I shall, accordingly, confine myself to one aspect of it—that in its relation to the modern scientific thought and I wish briefly to state the grounds on which I regard him as the prophet of the Twentieth Century.

The Nineteenth Century was an age of great intellectual upheaval. The many great discoveries in Science coming in quick succession unsettled men's minds, there was a reaction from the sway of dogmatic theology of era previous and it began to be thought that man could know all or all that was worth knowing—that what did not excite sense impressions not worthy of further consideration. Thus it happened—through a misapprehension, as a matter of fact—that Nineteenth Century Science was mainly agnostic in its tendencies. The commercial spirit of the age tended also in the same direction. Men who shut their laboratories when they went to their oratories, and shut their oratories when they went to their laboratories, were necessarily practically agnostics, their formal beliefs and professions, notwithstanding: Even the churches were sickled over, as it were, with a cast of agnosticism: "There is more faith in honest doubt than in half their creeds" expressed the real trend of even theistic thought in Europe through a greater part of the latter half of the last century.

In India, Western Science came as a flood of light to a world of superstition and lifeless customs, affecting, however, mainly the social rather than the religious thought. For, it should be noted, that the Hindu religion in its later aspects is to a great extent a phase of agnosticism.

It was in such an age, that Keshub Chunder Sen proclaimed his belief in "God Vision," in "True Faith," in "Yoga or Communion with God" and in

“Inspiration”: None of these doctrines was absolutely new, but he revived lifeless dogmas of the older theologies and made them alive with his intense religious belief. In an age when most people had made up their minds, at best, to an absentee God, a declaration that we can see Him, hear His Voice and can hold converse with Him, itself bears, as it seems to me, the impress of Supreme sanction.

But it was not a mere matter of doctrines with him; he tried to live his own gospel. His utterances on these subjects have therefore to be judged by other standards than those that are applicable to theological utterances in general—though even as contributions to the theological literature of the world they stand out as being among the most remarkable productions of their kind. In order to understand their full import, however, it is necessary to try to live the life they embody and it is on this account, I am much afraid, that he has been misunderstood by even his immediate followers and is likely to be misunderstood for a long time to come.

But why do I call him the prophet of the Twentieth Century? It is because I believe that the unsettling of men's minds in the Nineteenth Century is being followed by a general settlement in the Twentieth on lines laid down by Keshub Chunder Sen and because methods and conclusions of what I conceive to be likely to be Twentieth Century Science are in remarkable agreement with the methods and conclusions which he had, independently, arrived at.

It had been at one time thought that all discoveries in science could be made by the methods of mere induction and deduction. It has, however, been found that no really epoch-making discoveries have ever been made in that way; An insight of genius, a play of modern science are, therefore, in-

timately allied to those of Keshub Chunder Sen who declared that it was by prayer and through inspiration that all truths are to be discovered. It was not a new doctrine but to him it came not as an old remembered belief, but, as he has himself explained, as a simple life's experience and therefore with a vitality that no mere doctrine can have. He was ready, moreover, to apply the formal methods of induction and deduction, to illustrate and justify his creed whenever he felt it necessary to do so. In this way, he explained his doctrine of God-vision and used arguments, very similar to those used by scientific men to justify their belief in existences which are not cognisable by the senses.

For scientific men are driven to postulate such existences. An all-pervading ether, for instance, is postulated to explain the numerous phenomena with which physical science has to deal. And yet there is no possibility of its ever being directly appreciated by the senses. The old notion, therefore, that science has to deal only with the world of phenomena, as directly producing sense impressions, was based on a misapprehension.

Moreover, it is being gradually realised that the discoveries of science, rightly understood, point to the existence of a Supreme Being Who is in the universe of phenomena and Who, at the same time transcends it.

The doctrine of conservation of energy tells us that no energy is destroyed and, therefore, perhaps, no energy is created but, associated with it, there is the doctrine of dissipation of energy, which says, that energy tends from a more available to a less available form and therefore the physical systems of which we are cognisant, will have an end and, therefore, must have had a beginning.

And if matter can be explained, (as, leading



scientific thought seems to indicate) on the basis of a variable distribution of energy in the ether, we are led back again to a beginning, in order to explain matter itself. Similarly, any hypothesis that could be framed to account for the observed motions of celestial bodies, has to admit a certain initial configuration, while the doctrine of evolution, when suitably modified to explain genius, no longer appears to justify the old agnostic position.

In fact, no prominent scientific man, to day, seriously maintains the old view. While many of those who strenuously held to it, have left it recorded that they did not, by any means, regard agnosticism as the only possible view of the mysteries of nature, much less as a soul-satisfying creed. For it is now being recognised that science has to deal with phenomena of the physical universe and that a scientific creed that will receive universal acceptance must recognise unity in the diverse forces that are associated with them.

On this comprehensive scheme, the special teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen will demand and, I believe, receive acceptance in the Twentieth century. For he taught the doctrine of an all-embracing harmony, based on the principles of conservation and evolution towards which modern scientific thought is steadily tending. When the goal is reached, science and religion shall have settled their differences, there shall be peace among the warring churches and man's faith and intellect alike bear testimony to the Living God, Whom Keshub Chunder Sen worshipped and communion with Whom was source of all his inspirations.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN—A SYMPOSIUM.

BY THE REV. JOHN PAGE-HOPPS, ENGLAND.

*January 9, 1910.*

VERY great preassure of work prevents me complying with your request as I should wish, but I cannot be entirely silent, for I have long cherished the memory of your great spiritual teacher. He was my guest in Glasgow nearly forty years ago. He preached in my church there, and gave a wonderfully beautiful and thoughtful address to about two thousand people in The City Hall, where the Lord Provost presided. I well remember his charming simplicity, his benign temper, his refined contentment, and his devout spirit: but I wondered a little at his apparent indifference to the peculiar beauty of the scenery of Scotland. On my telling him so, he called the Scotch hills 'Baby mountains' and mentioned the Himalayas in contrast, and I had to tell him that every kind of scenery had values of its own.

What struck me most was his rapture, not his doctrine; his soaring spirit, not his reasoned argument. It seemed to me that he was not so much a theologian as a mystic: and therefore it does not surprise me that in his career there were breaks, and that in his writings there are inconsistencies. But that does not seem to me to be a reason for depreciation in estimating his value. If anything, it increases his value, for truth is many-sided and no one man, or no one mood can express it all.

Looking through his writings or reports of his addresses, I note his ardent glorification of British rule. "We shall prostrate at the feet of England," he says, "and learn those truths which she is des-

tined to teach us. We must gratefully accept these foreign forces because they come in the name of God." (Lectures in India, Part II Page 216). I wonder what he would say now. But it seems to me that he had always been intense, and that the thought of the moment had to find intense expression.

I shall always think of him as inspired and a prophet, though that does not in any sense imply infallibility. It only implies human receptivity of the inflowing of The Divine Spirit.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

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BY A. C. SEN, ESQ., M. A., C. S., RETIRED DISTRICT  
AND SESSIONS JUDGE, BENGAL.

*January 9, 1910.*

THE great Minister Keshub Chunder Sen visited Dacca three times. He went there the second time shortly after the charge of what was called *nara-puja* or man-worship had been brought against him. It was said that he had allowed a number of his admirers at Monghyr to pay him such respects as should be paid to the Supreme Being only and to treat him altogether as if he were an incarnation of the deity. I was then a student in the Dacca College. I attended his evening worship daily. He stayed at Dacca this time for a month. His prayers made a very deep impression on my mind. Most of the time he worshipped he wept. He wept like a simple little child who had been hurt in the innermost part of his soul. He made no complaint against any body but only tried to give expression to the sorrow he was suffering. At the time I knew nothing of what had

taken place at Monghyr but every time I heard him pray, the only conclusion I could come to within my mind was, that nothing could be more absurd and untrue than to bring such charge against such a dear little child of God.

About a year afterwards a class friend of mine presented me a pretty little bound book in which he had copied in a beautiful hand copies of a number of letters that Sadhu Aghore Nath had written to a friend of his. In these letters he described from time to time what was taking place at Monghyr. The letters were written in the most simple and graphic style of the author of the "Dhruva and Prahlad," and were full of deeply felt spiritual truths. They gave me the impression that it was really a foretaste of heaven on earth that they enjoyed at Monghyr very different from what is implied in man-worship.

The stay of the Minister for a month at Dacca was brought to close by holding a whole-day *Brahmotsav*, the first of its kind, I believe, ever held there. It was very numerously attended by the educated men of all classes. The spacious hall of Digu Baboo, a well-known Zemindar and merchant of the East Bengal, was beautifully decorated with flowers and evergreens for the purpose. The Minister himself was busy with this work upto a very late hour the previous night.

In the afternoon was held a conversational meeting on spiritual and social subjects. Two of the subjects on which the Minister spoke I distinctly remember. One was about the mission of his life. He said one of the missions of his life was to give new interpretations to the religious beliefs and rites of the Hindus. The other was about the ladies of the olden times as compared with their sisters of the new generation—he gave a great compliment to

the former. They were really experts in the art of cooking, he said, and took great delight in feeding people. In this connection he spoke very highly of his own mother.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

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BY RAI KALI PRASANNA GHOSE BAHADUR,  
VIDYASAGARA, C. I. E.

*January 9, 1910*

MY DEAR AND REVEREND FRIEND,—I beg to offer you my very best thanks for your letter of the 14th December which, to speak to you the truth, does me great honour. I have not been in good health since April last. I will, therefore, write a very short letter. But the letter, though short, will contain my heart's humble homage to the great character of Keshub Chunder Sen, whose name I bless every morning, while offering my prayers to the Almighty Father. I know I am too insignificant a man to speak of Keshub Chunder, who was while on earth, the admiration of the entire civilized world ; and who has been, since his departure to the higher spheres, exercising a tremendous influence on the thoughts of people, that have heard of him and read his sermons or lectures. But it is good that insignificant men also should be asked to think of the pure and noble life of Keshub Chunder, and thereby elevate their own thoughts to a higher plane. Keshub Chunder was, in one word, the Personification of Christ's Sermon on the Mount. He was poor in spirit, meek, merciful modest and humble, mourning for the welfare of others, thirsting after

righteousness—persecuted for righteousness, which was his constant guide ; and, what is over all and above all, he was “ pure in heart,” which placed him in direct communion with the Supreme. People in Bengal talked of nothing but Keshub—his doings and saying,—so long as he was, in an earthly sense, alive, and I have no hesitation in saying that if the youths and old men of our modern Bengal wish to command a respect of the world, they can do nothing better than hear of Keshub, with sentiments of Love and Reverence, and follow his footstep to the best of their power. I can confess to my shame that I was not fortunate enough to know the real Keshub, when he was living in the midst of us. It was surely my fault, and it was also my fault that I had not, in my early days, learnt to revere the great and the good of the world,—those sublime souls, who come now again to the world for the uplifting of humanity. But as repentance is never too late, I now repent.—I do most sincerely repent that I did not try to learn more of Keshub, during his work on earth and imbibe a little of the spirit that was in him. Our great Poet Kalidas has said,—

“ন কেবলং যো মহতোঃপভাষতে,  
শৃণোতি তস্মাদপি যঃ স পাপভাক্।”

I repent that I also, with my pretensions to goodness, lent my ears to those who reviled Keshub, and did not try to approach directly the god-man or the good man, whom modern India had produced.

I ought most gratefully to acknowledge here that I have, during the last fifteen years, done my best to study Keshub's character, with the help of his well-known disciples here and in Calcutta—gentlemen like Rev. Banga Chandra Roy, Rev. Ishan Chandra Sen, Rev. Girish Chandra Sen and also Rev. Mohendra Nath Bose,—and have, with a view to perform such

*Prayaschitta* as was possible now, delivered several anniversary lectures in honour of Keshub Chunder's memory, on which occasions, I most humbly acknowledged my indebtedness to Keshub, who has preached in the name of the Living God in India.

May Keshub's Angelic Spirit continue his work even now. You know I am a profound believer in the sacred truths of spiritualism, which preaches that those, who love and revere Keshub's name, can help themselves up by communion with Keshub in spirit. I do not feel ashamed to say that I, at times, try to commune with that exalted spirit for his support.

In faith and love, your ever grateful humble  
servant,—

To the Rev. M. N. Bose.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

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BY THE REV. JOHN MACRAE, OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

*January 9, 1910.*

THERE has been put into my hands lately, a volume of addresses delivered by Keshub Chunder Sen in India, which are of great interest to the student of the history of religion. It would ill become one who has, as I have, merely a general knowledge of the history of religious thought in India in the nineteenth century, to attempt any authoritative pronouncement upon them. But I might be allowed to say a little upon what is an interesting element in them, their evident desire for Social Reform. It seems characteristic of those tides of the Spirit, which sweep humanity that any religious

stirring of the hearts<sup>a</sup> of men should lead to thoughts of the betterment of man's life on earth, for on the one hand, an imaginative conception of a God among men must lead men to value humanity because of its value in the eyes of God, and on the other the quickening of devotion to God leads to a feeling of brotherhood, which calls no man alien.

These two stands of thought seem woven into the addresses in the volume which deal especially with Social Reform. His views of a new earth are based on a new thought of God in the earth. Religious reformation is at the bottom of social reform. Get rid of idolatry, worship the One true God, and you will recognise your fellow men as brethren. "If I believe that my God is one, and that He has created us all, I must at the same time instinctively, and with all the warmth of natural feelings, look upon all around me,—whether Parsees, Hindus, Mahomedans or Europeans—as my brethren."

Social reformation, where religious and social life are inextricably blended, needs a new religious idea, a new thought of God, to give the moral courage necessary to the pulling down of the social evils that have their sanction, if not their root, in an imperfect religious faith.

As he points out, the majority of the reforms proposed—and they are in the main what intelligent men still aim at—are merely destructive. A great constructive principle must animate them if they are to be anything but the pulling down of ruins in which the soul of man will be more marked and sordid than before, and that principle he finds, and rightly finds, in a quickened imaginative conception of God as one and God as love.

Social reform must start with individual reformation. The social reformer who neglects to reform



himself bequeaths but 'a cursed' legacy—an example of dishonesty, of unconscientiousness of hypocrisy and cowardice,' not words alone are wanted. A devoted and sincere life must prove the truth of them.

A true reform, based on the idea of one true God, and built up in the devoted lives of reformed men, was the necessity of the day as it seemed to him. Only in such an atmosphere would caste vanish, and all the social evils that threaten the progress of the land die a natural death.

The moral proceeds from the religious, the thought of the brotherhood of men can only be sustained by the *belief* in the Fatherhood of God. Thoughts like these have their message and their value still.

The need of construction is, of course obvious, of definite thoughts dealing with concrete problems, and no social system can be erected without hard sweat of brain. Emotion must not be allowed to run to seed. It must be turned to strong and persevering effort. But the root of effort and thought, must be this belief, deep in the hearts of men, that their fellow men are worth caring for, because God cares for them. That God is one, and God is love.

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KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

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BY THE REV. HERBERT ANDERSON,  
SECRY. BAPTIST-MISSION.

*January 9, 1910.*

INDIA has produced many great personalities during the last one hundred years. Among social reformers Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, among poets and authors Michael Madhu Sudan Dutt, and

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, among leaders of men Kristo Das Pal, Kasinath Telang, and Mahadev Ranade. But for greatest personalities the sphere of religious influence holds the palm—and an Empire that can enroll upon the banner of its heroic dead such names as Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanda Saraswati, Debendra Nath Tagore, and Keshub Chunder Sen has no reason to despise its past and none to tremble for its future.

It is possible to spend too much time and ink in singing the praises of a nation's past heroes, and some are doubting whether articles of laudation and speeches of praise are not being somewhat overdone in this city over much speech making. There is danger lest we forget that it was deeds not words that made these outstanding personalities of the past influence their own and future times. To make their day better and nobler, to stand before men wearing "the white flower of a blameless life," to be dauntless in the face of difficulty, humbled though greatly gifted, to lift aloft the torch of freedom in the midst of old age superstitions and hoary social darkness, these were the ideals they transformed into actualities, dreams they made the potent facts of passing history. The East, world-famed as the home of the mystic, and the paradise of pure thought became for them the Kuru Ketra of mighty deeds and bloodless victories—and the need of the hour we now reached is for the character and conduct of the illustrious dead—not for eulogies upon their greatness.

Ram Mohan Roy, Devendra Nath Tagore, Keshub Chunder Sen. These are names you cannot separate, forces in India's history and Bengal's glory that will abide. The history has yet to be written that will rightly expound their inter-relationship—the liberal and at times radical and advanced views that rose in

revolt against the cautious conservatism that flowed in the blood of these princes among men. The differences, disputes, secessions, and inevitable social separation, side by side with deep personal attachment, and mutual effort after the noblest and the best, that occurred among them are known only to the few in their inner history. But to many of us the outstanding glory of each lies in his genuine love for his time and people, his self-sacrificing ardour, the accomplishment of his greatest ambitions, his manly fight against ignorance and evil, his championship of all that meant the moral and social advance of his fellow countrymen, and perhaps more than all his love of God, and eagle sight of Truth.

I have already expressed some years ago in the pages of this periodical my judgment on the life and work of Keshub Chunder Sen, and the passing years have shewn no reason for altering the convictions then expressed. As a disciple of Jesus Christ that Master who

“ Wrought

With human hands the creed of creeds,  
In loveliness of perfect deeds  
More strong than all poetic thought,”

I have learned not to draw comparisons between Him and the great and good of all mankind—but to seek, in keeping with his own spirit, to see His loveliness in others, the reflection of that glory of light, the light which lighteth every man coming into the world. And in Keshub Chunder Sen the sympathetic seeker may find much of Christ.

Keshub's was a winsome personality. He carried about with him an atmosphere of joy. Those who lived closest to him in the days of his trials and conflicts, his disappointments and defeats were constantly astonished by the sunlight he carried in his soul, and that sunlight meant light and gladness—not to

himself alone but to those who were about him. I have read somewhere that during his memorable visit to England the homes he visited long remembered him for the smile that won the hearts of the children. Some men are great without winsomeness. He was both great and loving.

The rising generation will do well to recall that Keshub was also a patriot awake to national aspiration, and in deep sympathy with all that stood for national growth and political advancement. His patriotism however had for its foundation a belief that the British Government was a messenger of the Most High, and that in the tremendous moral force behind the power of the ruling race India's political social and religious regeneration was assured. "It is the conquest of mind effected in India" said he "which invests British rule with undying glory. It is Christ who rules India." This view is the view of the statesman and the seer. And for the century before us the true patriot will do wisely in following Keshub in his sterling loyalty behind his undoubted love of his own country, her heroes and heroines, her institutions and her history.

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## A LETTER FROM DR. GEORGE SMITH OF EDINBURGH.

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BY GEORGE SMITH.

*January 9, 1910.*

DEAR SIR,—Your letter, with papers, of 20th October has reached me just as I am leaving a Scottish winter for the south of France. Moreover, I have retired from all duty and have ceased to write for the Press.

It is long since I had the pleasure of receiving at luncheon in my house at Serampur, Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, whom I have ever honoured as saint and mystic. It has, therefore, given me the more pleasure to meet his daughter Mrs. Mahalanobis, and I look forward to seeing the Maharani in the house of my son, Sir James Dunlop Smith as we pass through London next week.

To the Rev. M. N. Bcse.

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TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF  
KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

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BY COMMISSIONER F. BOOTH-TUCKER.

*January 10, 1909.*

WHEN the Salvation Army landed in India, one of the mightiest spiritual forces and personalities was that of Keshub Chunder Sen. Indeed he loomed large on India's horizon and carried one back irresistably to the days of her ancient Rishis and Mahatmas. His personal magnetism, his lovability, his eloquence, his enthusiasm and sincerity made his individuality the most conspicuous and remarkable amongst his compeers, and placed him on the highest pedestal amongst both his predecessors and successors.

Even those who differed most from his views or tenets, could not but render homage to his unique individuality.

Personally I must say that my heart was very much drawn out towards the greatest of India's modern Reformers, and I esteemed it a great privilege to meet him in Lily Cottage and make his personal acquaintance. There were links in a chain

which bound our hearts together, and I felt it as a personal loss when I heard of the passing away of this great leader.

There were links, I say, that bound our hearts together, from the moment that his eloquent voice and pen bade a stirring welcome to the Salvation Army at the time of our arrival in Bombay, and when he fearlessly championed our cause at the great meeting in the Calcutta Town Hall, convened by him for the purpose of assuring Government that they need have no fear lest India should misunderstand our adoption of national customs, or our oriental methods and machinery.

1. The first link was that of *a common devotion to Christ* whom Keshub Chunder Sen prophesied that all India would welcome and accept, when He came divested of His European trappings and paraphernalia. In the Salvation Army, with its turbans and dhoties and saris and oriental imagery, the Indian apostle saw, I believe, the early fulfilment of his hopes and dreams.

2. And then he *loved India*, and hence he extended to us as lovers of India the enthusiastic welcome, which without that common link could not have found the same existence or expression.

3. Babu Keshub Chunder Sen was intensely *Spiritual*, and hence the spirituality of the Salvation Army appeal to him strongly. He longed to recall India from the worship of wealth and worldliness to the adoration of God.

4. And yet the great Reformer was intensely practical and threw himself wholeheartedly into the great national movements of a social character which meant so much to India's future welfare. And thus the Social and Practical Reforms, which constituted so important a part of the Army's propaganda appealed strongly to his humane and sympathetic nature.

And thus in our time of greatest need, this Indian Colossus, this incarnation and representation of India's spiritual soul yearnings and aspirations, preferred to us, whenever opportunity offered, in the name of the Christ whom he loved and sought to follow, the "cup of cold water" which shall in no wise lose its reward, and for which we shall always hold his memory in honoured remembrance.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN'S IDEALS.

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BY A PUNJABI BRAHMO.

*January 8, 1911.*

KESHUB Chunder Sen's spiritual ideals are very high. They are so high indeed that many have come to believe that their realization in this materialistic age is well nigh impossible. No doubt, we have talked a good deal about the sublime ideals of the New Dispensation. But the mere knowledge of an ideal is not enough to convert the life of an individual, much less the life of nation. A religious thought, however great, has very little influence in itself, until it is reduced to practice. We must, therefore, try to prove, by personal examples, that we have, though not fully, at least to some appreciable extent, acted upon the truths taught by Keshub Chunder Sen. For it must be borne in mind that the most convincing evidence of a religion lies, not so much in the purity and grandeur of its principles and essential doctrines, as in the lives that are led in conformity with them. Hence those amongst us who do not try to live as Keshub Chunder Sen lived, but simply preach, by mere word of mouth, what he

taught, are very nearly, as far off from him as those who once protested or unfortunately still protest against his special teachings. And we need scarcely add that our professions of the very deepest loyalty and allegiance to Keshub Chunder Sen are all hollow and perfectly meaningless, until our lives show that we are one with him in spirit. The New Dispensation is not a lifeless dogma. It is character. Let us not for one moment entertain the idea that we can please Keshub Chunder Sen by a simple acknowledgment of his greatness. Already, to every religious community its founder is more than man; a marvellously supernatural and miraculous being; a mediator between man and God, without whom no salvation is possible; nay more than it, God in human form, the very Creator of Heaven and Earth. And yet the fact remains that the most extravagant praises which the followers have lavished on their leaders have proved absolutely ineffectual in doing any lasting good to either party. We truly revere and admire a great man only when his spirit works in us, when his character is our character, his life our life. True discipleship in the New Dispensation is founded on a firm and abiding communion of this nature. So that what we need most just now is an earnest effort to follow, in our own humble way, the high ideals which Keshub Chunder Sen exemplified in his life. Take, for instance, Keshub's idea about God. His was a new God. To say that God is new looks absurd. He is neither old nor new. He is the same to-day as yesterday and for all time to come. What we mean is that to Keshub Chunder Sen the revelation of God was not old, that is, second-hand, a knowledge gained through some book or man. His idea of God was not borrowed from history. He did not bow down before a traditional deity, an historical divinity. He was no worshipper



of a God chiselled by the human hand, a creature of His own creation; or an unknown and unknowable force, the outcome of deep scientific research; or a God ruling the universe from an immeasurable distance through some special agents or agencies, or a deaf or dumb God who never speaks, never hears, but simply wants us to obey the dead letter of His law; or, at best, a God who spoke a word or two to the favoured few and then lost all power of speech. Keshub Chunder Sen believed in an ever-living, ever present God. While revering all prophets and saints, he was, before he was anything else, a most uncompromising, rigid monotheist, hating every form of worship which was not absolutely divine. A believer in the unity of God as he was, he did not care whether the number of gods worshipped was three, or thirty-three crores, or whether the object of adoration was the very highest person in the universe next to God, the very Son of God,—to him all this was simple man-worship, idolatry all the same, and therefore equally insulting to the One without a second. Who can by searching find out God unless God reveals himself to him? Hence, the most abiding and permanent of all dispensations is the ever fresh, ever new self-revelation of God. As the great luminary of the day chases away the darkness of night and fills the world with a flood of light, and as the simplest and the most natural condition to walk in that light is to open one's eyes, so does the divine light shed its lustre everywhere, and so does every devout and prayerful soul see God through the eye of faith. Such was Keshub Chunder Sen's faith in a living God. His testimony to the Reality of God was not based on a mere hearsay. He saw Him with his own eyes and heard His voice with his own ears. It was not, like a lightning flash, a temporary vision on some particular mountain top, or in

some dark, lonely solitude of a dense forest, but an initiative and abiding perception. Half a dozen *seers* like him, eye-witnesses of the all-pervading presence of God, the supreme life giving environment of the human soul, would move mountains. And if the Aryavarta remains unshaken, if alas the Brahmo Samaj of to-day is not what it was when Keshub Chunder Sen departed from this world, the only conclusion that we can draw is that we have hitherto failed to realize his ideal of a natural and Universal God-vision. And if, again, we do not change the present attitude of our mind and try, in the spirit of earnest prayerfulness, to establish, like him, our direct relation with God, our faith in the New Dispensation is a miserable caricature; he is no more our leader and we are no longer his followers. And though ever living in his own undying character, he is dead to us and we are dead to him.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN—AN APPRECIATION.

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BY THE REV. C. F. ANDREWS, DELHI.

*January 8, 1911.*

THERE is a passage in one of Keshub Chunder Sen's writings to which I constantly turn. It seems to me to give the true spirit of the man and to contain one of those autobiographical records which are illuminating in the highest degree. It also leads up to the main subject of this present article, which aims at showing how in Keshub himself there was a

prophetic vision such as made him in certain important directions a fore-teller of the religious attitude of the future. I shall not hesitate to quote the passage almost in full, long though it is, for it is one that needs to be re-read by all at each anniversary. Its setting is wonderfully simple, yet it speaks of the deepest truths that man can consider.

"I appear before you," he said in St. James' Hall, London in the year 1870, "as a Hindu Theist. I was born a Hindu and in my early days I thought and felt and lived as a Hindu, going through all the rites and ceremonies of idolatry. I never embraced Hinduism from honest and deliberate conviction, but lived as a Hindu because my parents did so, and my ancestors had done so for many generations. In course of time English education upset my faith, and made me feel that idolatry was a falsehood and an abomination in the sight of God. I felt I was intellectually and morally constrained to set my face against idolatry and its concomitant errors. There was nothing, however, to fill the place, which had been formerly occupied by Hindu superstition, and for two or three years I continued in a state of indifference and unconcern about matters of faith. At last it pleased Providence to reveal the light of truth to me in a most mysterious manner, and from that time there commenced a series of struggles, aspirations and endeavours which resulted in peace and in the conversion of the heart. The first lesson that God taught me was that it was His will that I should pray. When no book brought me any comfort, and no man rendered me any assistance whatsoever, God in the mysterious ways of Providence, pointed out to me the indispensable necessity of cultivating the habit of daily prayer. I persevered and in a few weeks found that there was strength in my heart and abounding joy and purity. Under

the guidance of the Spirit of God I came into contact with many books which were very profitable and among these was the Bible. Although there was much in it which I did not and could not accept, yet I found there marvellous truths, which tallied exactly with the inner convictions of my heart and these I not only accepted but turned to account.

"I began to pray with more earnestness and sincerity. I felt with David in the spirit of his Psalms, and I responded to the exhortations of Christ, and entered into communion with Paul. Thus I went on for many years growing in grace, in faith and in purity. It has always struck me that there must be something remarkable in the fact, that I have continued steadfast in my inward attachment to Christ, in spite of my standing aloof from many of the dogmas inculcated and taught by Christian missionaries in India. Why have I cherished respect and reverence for Christ? Why have I felt down towards the pages of the Bible, although I stand outside the pale of Christian Orthodoxy? Why, is it that, though I do not take the name 'Christian,' I still preserve in offering my heart's love and gratitude to Christ? There must be something in the life and death of Christ, which tends to bring comfort and light and strength to a heart heavy-laden with iniquity and wickedness. I may be allowed to say, I never studied Christianity by having recourse to controversial writings,—I seldom took delight in anti-Christian works,—nor did I ever betake myself to those voluminous books which treat of the evidences of Christianity. I studied Christ ethically, nay, spiritually,—and I studied the Bible in the same spirit,—and I must acknowledge that I owe a great deal to Christ and to the Gospel of Christ. Every man, who takes the Christian name represents one section of Christianity, although he

professes to take in the whole of the Christian creed: Christianity is a many-sided religion, and every individual and nation takes in a small portion only. From the peculiar circumstances in which he is born, from his peculiar training, each man accepts particular ideas and elements in that vast system of religion. These he accepts, and develops into a creed, till we see that a large number of individuals, entertaining a particular kind of opinion, form themselves into a sect. If such is the case, I may be justified in indicating the particular points in Christianity which have interested me most.

“My first enquiry was—What is the Creed taught in the Bible? Must I swallow the whole theology, which is put before the world as Christianity? Must I go through all the dogmas and doctrines, which constitute Christianity in the eyes of the various sects, or is there something simpler? I found Christ spoke one language and Christianity another. I went to him, prepared to hear what he had to say, and was immensely gratified when he told me,—‘Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy mind and with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and love thy neighbour as thyself,’ and then he added, ‘This is the whole law and the prophets.’ In other words the whole philosophy, ethics and theology of the law if the prophets are concentrated by Christ in these two grand doctrines of love to God and love to man. And then elsewhere he said, ‘This do and thou shalt live’ I was anxious to inherit eternal life, and humbly I approached Christ and waited for an answer and the answer I received was that if I loved my God with my whole life—not intellectually, but with my whole heart and soul,—and if I served man as my brother and loved him as myself, I could most assuredly inherit everlasting life. . . . But men need the means of

carrying out this sacred precept. Who will show the way ?

"There is something in the Bible which has staggered many who stand outside the pale of orthodox Christianity, and made them inimical to Christ,—I mean his sublime egotism and self-assertion. It is true he says, 'Love God and love man, and ye shall inherit eternal life,' but does he not also say '*I am the way, I am the light of the world*' ? Does he not say 'come unto *me* all ye that are weary and heavy-laden and *I* will give you rest ? Not in one or two exceptional passages, but in several passages he lays considerable stress on the *I*. There is constant allusion to himself as the way to eternal life. He who says that the only way to eternal life is the love of God and the love of man, says also, '*I am the way.*' Jesus Christ, then, truly analysed, means love of God and love of man. In him we see a heavenly embodiment of this love of God as Father and the love of man as brother."

I am tempted to go on further, and quote Keshub's explanation of the Cross and Passion of Christ, and of that Sacrament which Christ ordained, saying—"This is My body : do this in remembrance of Me," but I must not carry this long quotation to a still greater length. Suffice it to say, that in the explanation that he gives, he strikes the note of inward spirituality and moral obedience, as contrasted with outward form and ceremonial observance.

In all these, as also in Mozoomdar's most illuminating book 'the Oriental Christ,' there is to me, a Christian something supremely suggestive and instructive. Keshub and Mozoomdar were writing in an earlier generation of missionary endeavour, when the Christianity presented to India was far more wrapped up in western forms and western

denominational teaching than it is to day. The conviction that Indian spiritual thinkers must go to the fountain-head, Christ Himself, and learn from Him His own central gospel, apart from any western, obscuring medium, was one which had not then dawned upon the minds of many missionaries, who came out from Europe and America. If that conviction is gaining ground to-day, if the character of the modern missionary movement is changing, then it is in no slight measure due to the protest made by Keshub, and his prophetic insight into the spiritual need and yearnings of his own countrymen, which he so ably expressed. The missionary presentation of Christ forty years ago was to him unsatisfying, and he boldly declared it to be so. History has since proved how true his estimate was on the sides he specified. Those who are able to read between the lines of what has been recently written in the Report of the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference (where the greatest body of expert missionary opinion was gathered together from all parts of the globe) will see how much in the changed attitude therein represented is due to Keshub and the Brahmo Samaj. They have been prisoners, not merely within their own hody. Besides this, and it is no small or insignificant achievement, they have been able to move to greater sympathy and understanding the large missionary forces whose aim and object it is to draw India to Christ. They have shown in a great measure the method which needs to be adopted, if that object is to be attained without destruction of indigenous thought and life. The method is that of assimilation to the best spiritual instincts of the country, rather than that of imposing on the East a ready-made system from the West.

To show how the missionary attitude has changed I would take a paragraph from a Japanese Christian

quoted in the Edinburgh Report. "We want more faith in God! Our system and your system are not necessarily the perfect and final type of Christianity, and therefore in the expressions of faith in non-Christian lands we must be patient. We must wait for the time of *the real expression of their spiritual experience* and that is important, not only for the sake of the Churches in those lands, but also for the sake of the mother Churches; because in this way only will Christ's full personality be glorified and revealed in all the world." This short speech was received with stronger approval than almost any uttered at the Conference.

To show again the changed attitude within the missionary ranks, I would take the most recent missionary apologetic from the Rev. Bernard Lucas' book entitled 'Christ for India.' "It is the moral grandeur," so he writes, "of Jesus which is the distinctive characteristic of His message. It is this which so transfigures our common humanity, that we feel irresistibly that we have seen the light of the very glory of God in the person of Jesus. Men may dispute the Divinity of Jesus, but they instinctively bow down in the deepest reverence, of which they are capable, before His moral grandeur. The intellect may not be satisfied as to His Divinity in a metaphysical sense, but the moral nature recognises it and bends in worship. *If the glory of God is moral beauty and the essence of God is moral worth expressed in pure and holy love*, then there is no question that the supreme manifestation of **that** nature is that which confronts us in the character of Jesus."

Compare these two passages with the quotation from Keshub's own writings with which I began this article. It will not be difficult to see how far religious thought has moved forward since Keshub's



day, and how true in certain directions was his prophetic insight into the spiritual longings of his own people, when judged in the lights of the history of our own times. We have learnt that while the metaphysical may have fascinated the Hindu mind in bygone days, it is the ethical and moral alone which captivates the heart of modern India.

At this point I wish to guard myself against a possible misconception. While I am continually surprised and delighted, when reading Keshub's writings, with his grasp of the fundamental Christian position in certain directions, his deep penetration, his separation of the outward form from the inner substance of the message, his perception of the spiritual and the moral; yet at the same time I feel that he was right in calling himself a Hindu Theist rather than a Christian. For there were other sides of the Christian message, not sectarian or western, which he failed to understand. But it is not on these that I need to dwell in an article such as this. Rather I would emphasise the points of agreement and approximation, and also state frankly and clearly the debt which we, as Christians, owe to him and other Brahmo leaders for their wider interpretation of our own Faith here in the East.

There is a movement within Christendom today, which is growing in spiritual intensity every year,—a movement which found wonderful expression in that World Conference at Edinburgh last June to which I have already referred. It is a movement towards religious unity,—a unity which will not necessarily obliterate differences, but rather transcend them in the passionate love of God and man which Christ left as His heritage to his Church. Those who have come back from Edinburgh have told us, how the spiritual longing for unity and brotherhood, amid outward differences, was so

deep as to become an almost articulate cry running through the vast assembly, moved and swayed as it was by the Holy Spirit of God. They tell us that they will never be able to forget the power and intensity of that longing.

To me that inarticulate cry of the soul for unity and fellowship is a harbinger of better days to come. It will mean, I fervently believe, a desire for clear union, not merely among those who are Christians, in the more defined use of the term, but with those who, in the spirit of Keshub, are ready to express their sympathy with the noblest ethical teaching of the Christian faith. Many of my own dearest friends in India,—those with whom I have felt a kinship of spirit indescribably real and precious,—have been members of the Brahmo Samaj. On this anniversary of their great leader I am grateful indeed to them that they have asked me to contribute an appreciation of Keshub's message to the *Unity and the Minister*. I am conscious, painfully conscious, of the feeble and wholly inadequate way in which I have performed my task dealing as I have done, with one side of his message only. But if it is true that love can cover a multitude of shortcomings, then I would offer that love, which is in my heart, as the only adequate offering to Keshub's own memory that I can give, and extend it with all sincerity and good will to Keshub's followers both known to me and unknown. May each anniversary, as it passes, draw us nearer together in the brotherhood of souls; and may we realise, each year, more and more, that deeper unity which underlies the differences of sect and creed,—the unity which finds its ultimate expression, deeper than all thought or speculation, in love and love alone.

## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN—REMINISCENCES.

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BY BABU HEMENDRANATH SINHA, B. A.

*January 8, 1911.*

WHEN I was quite a child, I used to come with my sainted father to Calcutta and to the Jorasanko residence of the great Maharshi Devendranath Tagore. I used to hear my father talk of his friend Keshub Chunder Sen, a co-disciple of his great *Guruji*, as my father used to lovingly call the Maharshi, his spiritual Master, and latterly mine too.

The tall, fair, loving, majestic, and serene Maharshi very much attracted and impressed me. His bright, smiling, poetic, good-natured, talented and happy children interested me.

His eldest son and daughter made very deep impression on me. I have never heard a heartier and more spiritual laughter than that of his eldest son, *Rishi* Dwijendranath, one of my father's best and most valued friends in life. He is such a simple and sweet child of Nature, like my father, in spite of deep Philosophy and vast scholarship!

Rabindranath was then but lisping in numbers.

Keshub's bright and eloquent face, which I had often seen while yet a boy, in the Brahmo Somaj of India, left a never-to-be-obliterated print on my memory.

He had then given up the world. He had left his father's dwelling, while quite young, on account of social and religious difficulties that had begun with his spiritual career.

He had, then, completed his spiritual training under his Master Maharshi Devendranath, under his hospitable roof at Jorasanko.

## HIS TRAINING IN PROPHET-HOOD.

Who but Maharshi Devendranath could be the Master of one like Keshub? My father used to call Maharshi his ideal man. So, indeed, he was! He was one of the sweetest and the greatest personalities I have ever known.

In the midst of trials and persecutions, Keshub preserved and advanced in his spiritual exercises, under the sheltering love of the great Maharshi, whose magnanimous and benevolent heart knew no difference between his own son and Keshub Chunder Sen.

It is only the great who can love. A great man alone can inspire greatness in others.

Keshub received the prophet's baptism from Devendranath, who inspired him with his intense love of God, and though himself declining into the vale of years, had put the fire of burning zeal for the spread of Theism into his young disciple. Under the fostering love of such a spiritual father, Keshub Chunder reared a beautiful and robust manhood, which came out into full view in after years.

His was the most trying preparation,—that of a prophet! The path to prophet-hood does not lie through a bed of roses. The prophet is always a man of sorrows, wears a crown of thorns and is a stranger at home.

Lord Buddha had to go into homelessness and poverty, and leave his parents, kingdom, wife and child for a schooling in prophet-hood. Sakya Sinha said to his last disciple Subhadda,—

“ Since thirty youthful years were mine. Subhadda,  
When I forsook my home to seek the highest,  
And one-and-fifty years have passed, Subhadda,  
While I have still fared forth, a strenuous pilgrim,  
Through the wide realms of righteousness and truth.  
For there, and there alone, is freedom found.”

—From Paul Dhalke's “ Buddhist Essays.”

Krishna, Christ and Moses, before him, had to escape from the hands of their murderers, in infancy.

History, Mythology and Scriptures are replete with such examples of what Sakya Sinha called,—“Learning the perfection of endless suffering.”

Ram Chandra, the son of King Dasarath of Ajodhya, his brother Lakhsmana and wife Seeta,—Judhisthir, the King of Hastinapur and his great brothers, Bhima, Arjoona, Nakula, Sahadev and wife Draupadi, had to go to school at the feet of Nature, in the forests, for twelve long years.

Even our Master, the great Maharsui, had to part company with his father's vast wealth and go into solitude and comparative poverty in the garden-house at Polta, for the space of about twelve years, before he could befit himself for the career of a Maharshi,—a great Seer,—a great Prophet!

Maharshi-hood was purchased by Devendranath in exchange for his father's millions!

Prophet-hood has never been had cheap. You or I, or whosoever would go in for it, must go through the same process of psychological evolution.

The Maharshi once told me himself, while in the 52/2 Park Street residence in Calcutta,—“What are your trials and difficulties compared to what I have had after my father's death?”

The Theistic movement in India, in the Nineteenth Century, ushered in by Raja Rammohan Roy and fed and nourished by the deep spirituality of the Maharshi, was passed on to Babu Keshub Chunder Sen, in the course of its natural evolution.

When Maharshi found it time to retire and to betake himself to *Banaprastha*, i. e., retirement, meditation and spiritual life alone, the flag of Theism was taken up by Brohmananda Keshub Chunder Sen. He carried it overseas and planted it in the heart of the British isles.

In a manner, Keshub heralded the spiritual conquest of England and Europe by India, which is politically subject to the former.

Did not Rome conquer Israel? And did not Jesus, an Israelite, eventually capture and vanquish the Roman world and plant his Cross over the Capitoline Hills at Rome?

If England is proud of having conquered India by the sword, let India aim, not at a kingdom that will one day pass away, but at an Empire of the Spirit that will extend with the onward march of the times.

If ideas have power over matter,—the ideas of Indians will most certainly have power over the materialism of the West!

Greatness alone recognises and admires greatness, Englishmen and England discovered true greatness. In Keshub and shewed him the respect, he could not find in India.

The world admires his eloquence and success.

The endless trials, through which his beautiful personality was built up, were never properly seen or realised by the world.

It took him years of strenuous effort and hard struggle,—of ceaseless praying and watching,—of great self-control and self-denial,—to build up his inner life,—to qualify himself for the prophet's bowl and the prophet's crown.

Like all great men, he came to perfection through endless suffering and neglect.

The great Kathopanishad has it,—“The Masters say, ‘The path is over the sharp edge of a razor as it were,—so hard and difficult.’”—1. 3. 14.

The path to spirituality is through rugged ravines and over steep precipices.

The great scientist Edison has very recently remarked,—“Genius is two per cent of inspiration and ninety-eight per cent of perspiration.”

The French definition of Genius is,—“The capacity for taking infinite pains in any matter.”

The inward struggle is greater than the outward success.

We see the acting on the stage, but not the preparation in the green-room of the spirit. Everything is planned and enacted in the unseen world, before it is exhibited in the visible.

Like Goldsmith's old Vicar, I have always been an admirer of happy human faces.

I have never looked on Keshub's picture, without reading, in the beautiful smile on his face, the endless suffering and the ceaseless warfare he had with the Devil, in the flesh,—in the world.

The sense of complete victory over Satan threw a halo of purity and joy over his features, which one never misses in the faces of victors in the battle of the spirit.

In the *Tableau* of the Meditative Man,—in the statuesque calmness of Sakya Muni, under the tree of wisdom, we notice the same majesty in the features of one, who had completely got over his lower self or *Mara*,—the killer.

This reminds me of the celestial figure of one who was bending in prayer at Gethsemane and looking up towards Heaven for light and leading. The same face, with the stamp of self-mastery and resignation, was in the figure hanging on the cross at Calvary !

In the depth of the mysteriously grand and beautifully sublime tropical night, on the sombre heights of Mount Hira, one might come upon the Prophet of Islam bending in prayers, and recognise a family resemblance, in spite of the distance of centuries, between the features of the Arab Prophet and those of the Maharshi and the Brohmananda, “silent with adoration,” in the sublime solitude of the Himalayas.

In the faces of the wingless angels, who come to bless and illumine humanity now and then, and to preach the things to be, we find,—

“The most complete picture of happiness that ever was or can be drawn. It represents that state of mind for which all alike sigh, and the want of which makes life a failure.

It represents the Heaven, which is everywhere, if we could but enter it, and yet almost no-where, because so few of us can.

The two or three who win it, may be called victors in life's conflict.

To them belongs the *regnum et diadema tutum*. —Ecce. Homo.

In Kesub's face, one finds “the royalty of inward happiness,” and endless patience !

Keshub's “unrivalled simplicity of devout confidence in God” carried him through all his trials, and struggles for spiritual perfection, for—“The Lord prepareth for us a table in the midst of our enemies.”

Keshub's inspiration kept him up, under all circumstances, and sustained him.

In his books and speeches, one cannot help finding his Inspiration,—his simplicity, clarity of thought and chastity,—the abandon and the spontaneity of the inner man. His essays and tracts,—*Jiban Veda*, *Sebaker Nibedana*—*Brohmogietopanishad*,—prayers, everywhere, you meet with the man, inside out,

There is no effort or imitation anywhere. The mouth speaketh out of the fulness of the heart. The fountains within are set aflow and are ever-gushing forth in melodious streams.

We everywhere come across the coolness of the stream,—the freshness of the meadow,—the perfume of the roses and lilies springing up into blossom on



every side,—the joyousness of the spring—the breath of Heaven, blowing Ozone for the spirit! Such is Keshub's style.

#### KESHUB'S MISSION.

Theism, like a most delicate plant in a tropical climate, had to be hedged in and shaded by Brahminism, when it was first sprouting and growing into a sapling again, after the decline of Kshatryaism in India, under the fostering care of the Raja and the Maharshi.

It was left to Baboo Keshub Chunder Sen to grow it into a stalwart giant, powerful enough to brave all storms and weather all seasons.

He gave Indian Theism a really cosmopolitan form and stamped it with the character of an universal religion, by the side of which, Brahminism, in spite of its local excellence, and with its thread-bound limitations, could not but look small, narrow and selfish.

There was in Keshub's make-up much that would appeal to the man of the Twentieth Century, though it had made his relations with some of his contemporaries undersirable and unpleasant. That is, because, he had outgrown them.

His extra-ordinary simplicity,—and his burning desire for liberty, equality and fraternity for all men,—his deep spiritual insight and prophetic vision, landed him in a region, where his former companions and followers found it difficult to keep him company.

His downright and straight-forward ways have often been misunderstood,—misinterpreted and animadverted upon.

Those like me, whose interests do not clash with Keshub's and, who are at the distance of more than a quarter of a century from him, can judge him from a better and historic stand-point.

Had Keshub Chunder Sen been born a few centuries earlier, he would have been looked upon as a second *Chaitanya Deva* of Bengal or a greater and later *Kabiraj Goswami*.

He had not only thought sublimely, felt nobly and acted rightly, but he left the stamp of his wonderful personality on a band of loyal followers, who would have been very ordinary and humdrum specimens of humanity without his masterly and magic touch.

If we are to judge of great men by the effect of their lives on society, we might say that here was a man who had left his mark on his times and on his society ! He was a very great Social Reformer.

Some of us might find fault with him, but there is no denying the loftiness and universal character of the ideals preached by him.

He lived very much in advance of his times and, hence, he was out of harmony with many of those around him.

To speak in the language of Carlyle, Keshub Chunder Sen "dethrone a Brahmin-god and tried to establish a Spirit-God."

Brahminism, with its infinitely stuck-up arrogance and priestly pride, and hatred of other castes, and with its idolatry and priest-craft has been the greatest curse of India.

India can never rise, so long as Brahminism enthral and dominates it.

Keshub's prophetic spirit felt that the Salvation of India meant its freedom from Brahminism.

Keshub's psychic ear heard the Voice of the Spirit and did what others, without that spiritual gift equally developed, would label irresponsible conduct.

Life alone can beget life. Like draws to like. Had Keshub been disloyal to himself and insincere, how could he have drawn to himself such a band of devoted, sincere and god-fearing disciples ?

Does not one's company show up the man ?

There was a total absence of sham,—humbug, and caddishness in him. Had there been any, he could not have helped so many godly lives to be built up around him !

Like all prophets, he ushered in the Kingdom of Righteousness, the Dawn of *Satya-Yuga*, on earth and held aloft the ideals towards which all humanity is ever marching.

He spoke of the Fatherhood of God and of the Brotherhood of Man,—of a greater hope for humanity,—of a brighter dawn and a more luminous day,—of a grander prospect, for the whole world !

In his Scheme of Salvation, there was no medium,—no priestly intervention,—no high caste or untouchably low caste,—no Esoteric Way ! Every thing was plain, simple, downright, sincere and overboard.

God is our Father. We are His children. His Kingdom is our birthright. No priest, no scripture, no document can stand between us and our Father,—between us and his Kingdom of Heaven.

Where would Young India have been now, had it not been for the Purity and Temperance movements which Keshub pushed on ?

He raised and ennobled womanhood. He gave her equal, intellectual, moral and spiritual rights with man.

He stood up against child-marriage.

He taught Young India the great efficacy of Prayer,—the power and majesty of Character, and the infinite value of Chastity.

He demonstrated what prayerfulness could accomplish.

He interpreted the East to the West and the West to the East,—and tried to draw closer together the bonds of union between the different and discordant races of India, and to knit together Conti-

nents, hitherto kept apart by the oceans and misunderstandings of one another.

I wish that he were living now !

Let us all pray to the Father that we may humbly walk in the path of righteousness, which alone led Keshub Chunder Sen to greatness and power and prophet hood, for nothing but righteousness can exalt and save an individual or a nation for, "in it alone is freedom found."

There is no other way ! There is no other way to life's sovereign good !!

Om ! Peace, Peace and Peace !!!

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

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BY REV. W. S. URQUHART, M. A., B. D.

*January 14, 1912.*

THE name of Keshub Chunder Sen is one that must be approached with the greatest reverence. While those who do not belong to the community which he founded, have not perhaps the opportunity of understanding fully the nature of his aims and aspirations, yet there is no one to whatever creed he may belong, whose deepest feelings of admiration and appreciation are not stirred by the noble life and teaching of this man—one of the greatest of India's saints and religious reformers. It would be strange indeed if one whose predominant life-aim was to establish the unity of spiritual religion was so to fail of the accomplishment of his purpose as to remain without attraction for men of many various faiths and to leave them uninfluenced by his efforts towards a unification of religion, however much they may

differ as to the way in which this unity may best be established.

In this short article I should like to touch briefly upon three points in the teachings of Keshub Chunder Sen,—his relation to History, his relation to Pantheism and his relation to Christianity. First his relation to history.—In saying that he was above all a religious reformer, one aspect of this relation is indicated. Those who are familiar with the story of his life know how he refused to be content with state of things religiously in which he found himself at the beginning of his career as a teacher. He set himself against the twin evils of superstition and caste, in other words he desired improvement both religiously and socially. The past was not sufficient for him. As he himself said, "It is beginning to be felt that the past cannot be the ruler of the present, and the theology of the present day must give place to something higher and better." He desired to alter the basis of authority in religion. It was to rest no longer upon creeds and institutions but upon the answer of the human soul to the influence of the divine. He demands that nothing shall be taken as true simply because it is the custom so to regard it, or because it is contained in a sacred book or recited in an accepted creed. The only witness worthy of trust is *ultimately* the witness of the human consciousness which has taken up into itself and acknowledged all other witnesses, has thus found itself listening to the voice of God. In a word he desires to substitute a religion of the spirit for a religion of authority. At the same time he does not fall into the error of so many reformers both before and after his day. He does not regard the past as having no meaning, and of himself as standing in absolute independence of all previous teaching. He regards, the revelation of the One God as three-fold,—in nature, in history, and

in the human consciousness, and one of his sayings is "every sensible man must have a due respect for his history." And while he regards himself as, to use his own phrase—"a singular man," he does not consider that he stands outside the stream of history, learning nothing and needing nothing from the teaching of the past. He almost indignantly repudiates the idea that he is himself an "inspired prophet" and with deep humility and gratitude acknowledges his debt to the religious teachers of other days. From the past of the East and of the West alike he draws his inspiration. His task, as he himself conceives it, is not to initiate an entirely new beginning, but to bring down from the past the influences that make for the spiritual uplifting of humanity and pass them on, purified and strengthened, for the good of future ages. Yet while his attitude to history was receptive and reverential, it was not wholly passive. A mere dead past had no interest for him. It was the past as living on into the present that had meaning for him. As he himself says, "The historical characters that came to me were all fire."

Secondly, the relation of Keshub Chunder Sen's teaching to pantheism. Strongly influenced as he was by the religious tradition of his own country, it might have been expected that he would show considerable leanings towards pantheism. He points out that it is a very natural reaction from polytheism, with its too exclusive attention to the material and that many, feeling the force of this reaction, have gone the length of identifying the human mind with the divine. He himself however recoils from such an extreme. As he says, "We should guard ourselves against this evil extreme. While we respect the soul within us as God's work, we must not exalt it so far as to identify the created

spirit with the creator and say, in the blasphemous language of proud pantheism, 'I am God.' His theistic position is strongly maintained. The absolute infinity and unity of the Divine Creator must be allowed to usurp His sovereignty. Nevertheless God is to be conceived of as immanent as well as transcendent. He reveals himself in the whole life of nature, in the spirit of mankind in general as well as specially in outstanding personalities. This transfusion of the whole universe with the Divine is an aspect which strongly appeals to Keshub, and in emphasising it he shows at once his debt to his inherited religious tradition and his sympathy with modern religious tendency. The attitude of the *Yogi* is one in which he very easily finds himself, and he does not hesitate to confess himself a mystic. It is however a mysticism of an exceedingly robust type, it is far from being sentimental obscurantism, quietism or trance. Love to God "is not abnormal sentimentalism or mystic attachment but the loving union of man's entire being with the Divine nature." It involves also keenness and openness of mind as well as depth of devotion. Science and religion cannot be dissociated. All progress in scientific discovery is but a further penetration into the secrets of God. The type of pantheism which most appeals to him is that which he finds in Christianity. He contrasts "Christ's pantheism" with Hindu pantheism and finds the former a loftier and more perfect type. "It is", he says, "the conscious union of the human with the divine spirit in truth, love, and joy. The Hindu sage realises this union only during meditation, and he seeks unconscious absorption in his God, with all his faults and shortcomings about him. His will not at one with the will of God. But Christ's communion is active and righteous, it combines purity

of character with devotion. Christ's pantheism is the active self-surrender of the will. It is the union of the obedient, humble and loving son with the Father."

This brings us to our last point—viz., the relation of Keshub Chunder Sen's teaching to Christianity. He himself acknowledges in no unmeasured terms the debt which he owes to Christianity, his fundamental doctrines are in agreement with certain fundamental doctrines in Christianity. In a word it may be said that he is as nearly a Christian as he could possibly be without actually becoming one. This is certainly the case with many of his lectures, notably the one on "India asks: Who is Christ?" He tells us that he is thankful to say he never read anti-Christian books with delight. It is true of course that he says with great directness, "I am not a Christian, none of the numerous sects into which the Church of Christ is divided would allow my creed to be identified with its own," yet it is also true that his teaching is permeated with the spirit of Christianity. And though he formally allows Christ a place only as one of the prophets, yet he is so profoundly influenced by the teaching of Christ that, if there is any truth in theory of value judgments at all, for him also, implicitly, if not explicitly, Christ is God. Christ represents the manward aspect of God, and emphasises the possibility of divine sonship, a type of perfect agreement with God, and communion of spirit. The true meaning of Christ's life is above time, having value from all eternity and to all eternity. Several of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity are also emphasised, e.g., the need of humanity because of their sin, and the correlative doctrine of the mercy of God. The connection between the mercy of God and the incarnation of Christ is not perhaps brought out so clearly as in explicitly



Christian teaching. It is not too much to say that for Keshub Chunder Sen the problem of Christ is the problem of the religious consciousness and is worthy of unceasing study. "How can I understand Jesus?" he asks, "Two thousand years have not shed enough light upon the mysteries of his life and his relation of God"—and yet to know the length and breadth and depth and height of the love of Christ is the worthiest task of humanity, that in which humanity, realises itself. The doctrine of the uncreated Christ and the created Christ is fully accepted by Keshub as enabling him to explain the unity of all that is best in humanity as gathered up in Christ, and to quote with emphatic agreement the Johannine description of Christ as "the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." Practically also he looks forward with eagerness to the victory of Christ over the hearts and lives of men. "The truth is that Christ will perforce overcome and penetrate your souls." And to quote but one other passage and one which comes home to us here in India,—could we have a more passionately hopeful outburst than this! "None but Jesus, none but Jesus, none but Jesus, ever deserved this bright, this precious diadem, India; and Jesus shall have it."

The great Brahmo leader had all the premises of Christianity, only he did not draw the conclusion—at least not in his earthly life. Perhaps he was prevented by over-hasty conclusions drawn by others. But of this I am very sure that over and over again for him Christ was all in all,—the unity of religious thought and life, Eastern and Western, past, present and to come.

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## REV. MR. ANDERSON'S LETTER.

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*January 1913.*

MY DEAR MR. BOSE,

Thank you for your note and tokens of remembrance and for your New Year good wishes which I need hardly add are sincerely reciprocated. I have to leave Calcutta on a long journey to Lushai next week, and I very much regret that the work and engagements already arranged will not enable me to give the time requisite to an article of any worth on Keshub Babu. You know however my feelings about him and my high admiration of much that he attempted—and much that he accomplished. He pitched his waggon to the stars—as the Americans would say, and though History has not justified his expectations—and the weakness of human nature has brought discord instead of harmony among those who were his followers—his personality will never lose its charm for those who knew him best and loved him most. It is not for us to over-estimate the work of our friends, but it is fitting to give expression to our affection for them, and to lay a wreath of sweet remembrance at their feet, especially when, as in the case of Keshub Babu, they sought to do so much for their brother-men and sister-women.

As I have promised to speak at the meeting on January 8th at the Overtoun Hall, you must excuse more than these few lines, which you can publish if you desire.

I am Your affectionately,  
HERBERT ANDERSON.

TRIBUTE FROM AMERICA

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*January 12, 1913.*

MR. M. N. BOSE,  
81 Upper Circular Road,  
Calcutta, India.

MY DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your invitation to participate in the symposium of tributes to your deceased leader. My answer explains itself and I trust may be in some degree satisfactory.

Wishing you and your cause every success,  
I remain

Sincerely yours,  
CHAS W. WENDTE.

Dear Sir, and a Fellow-worker for a rational and reverent Theism :

Your invitation to contribute to your columns an appreciation of the character and services of your great leader and inspirer, Keshub Chunder Sen, honors me more than I shall be able to honor him by any response of which I am capable. It was not my privilege to have known, or to have even listened to your illustrious seer and orator. Only the tradition of his wondrous spiritual insight and eloquent utterance of his vision and prophecy has come down to me, through the printed page and the communications of his rapt and grateful disciples, such as my revered friend Protap Chunder Mozoomdar. That he was born of the spirit, lived for truth and holiness, and by his extraordinary genius deepened and enriched the religious capacities and trusts of all who came within the magic circles of his personal influence, is the universal testimony of the men and women of his generation

Engaged myself in an endeavour to promote a better understanding and interchange of sympathy and service between the peoples of the West and those of the East, and especially between youthful America and time honored India, I have recently found myself greatly encouraged and instructed by reading of the "apostles", whom Keshub sent out to bear fraternal greetings and study sympathetically the religious systems of Buddhist, Mahomedan, Persee, Sikh, and Christian, not only to exchange religious ideas and experiences with these stranger faiths but to bring back to their own Brahmo fellowship new and fructifying truths for their consideration and adoption. How much loftier, wiser and more brotherly was such a form of spiritual propagandism than the exclusive claims and narrow missionary endeavours still, alas ! current in our day on the part of Christians towards the so-called "heathen" world !

One of these apostolic messengers was the beloved disciple Mozoomdar, sent to the Christian nations of the earth. His lofty personal character, the charm of his private discourse, the eloquence of his public utterances, above all, the spiritual fervor and catholicity of his soul, won all our hearts to assent and admiration. One fruit of his mission to us was his noteworthy book, "The Oriental Christ," which gave Christians a new conception of their great master as an Eastern sage and saint, and drew closer the bonds between Hindu, Semitic, and Anglo-Saxon races, the common children of the One and only God, our Father.

That the memory, of such great and kingly leaders of the race, may ever be preserved, not to tyrannize over but to emancipate and inspire us, to give us new faith and courage in the struggle of life, it is surely good to recall them at appropriate times and

seasons, and celebrate their virtues and their services,

“ So let light stream on their deeds of love

Which shamed the light of all but heaven !

And in the book of fame the glorious record of their virtues  
write,

And hold it up to men, and let them exclaim

A name like theirs, and catch from them the hallowed flame !

CHAS. W. W. WENDTE,  
Foreign Secretary of the  
*American Unitarian Association.*

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## IMPRESSIONS OF KESHUB CHUNDER SEN,

BY DEBENDER CHUNDER GHOSE.

*February 12, 1913.*

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THE Editor of *Unity and the Minister* has been pleased to command me to give my impressions of Keshub Chunder Sen as I knew him in life, and I bow to his wishes.

I came under the influence of Keshub Chunder Sen in 1861 when I was a student in college, and this association with him continued for several years till I removed myself from his neighbourhood and entered a new sphere of life. My knowledge of him covers the period preceding the social event in his life which led to the secession of some worshippers of his church, who soon after established a place of worship of their own, called the Sadharan Brahmo Somaj.

Keshub was one of the three brothers, of whom Nobin was the eldest and Krishna Bihari the

youngest. Nobin was an orthodox Vaishnava Hindu, and a very estimable man. Keshub was non-idolatrous and non-compromising in his social and religious ideas. But in the matter of food and drink, he was a vegetarian and a teetotaler, and was as good a Vaishnava in that respect as his elder brother was, Krishna Bihari shared with Keshub in his spiritual ideas and exercises, but his temperament, while it gave him strength and love, had made him undemonstrative and quiet.

Keshub had gathered round him a band of men who assimilated, in varying degrees, his spiritual fervour and fire. Some of them are dead, some are still living and working in the same path— a few under physical difficulties—and others have strayed into active worldly pursuits. Whatever measure of wholesome success in life these latter have attained has been determined and shaped by principles imbibed with their contact with Keshub Chunder Sen.

Of those who are now dead, Protap Chunder Mazoomdar was the most conspicuous by reason of his perspective mind and power of expression in English. His tongue and pen were consecrated to the cause of the wider dissemination of spiritual ideas, which were being developed in Keshub's time and shaped into New Dispensation. Protap wrote an excellent biography of his friend and teacher, and to my mind it was well and faithfully executed, though to some, with more critical eyes, it appears in a different light.

Keshub's Brahmo School and Sangat and his ministrations brought many an indifferentist to the path of God, to seek and abide by Him, to seek and stick to truth and righteousness, to be prayerful, and to be abhorrent of sinful ways, impure ideas, and unholy and selfish feelings. Their love was

expadned, and they came to feel mankind as a brotherhood. Hence followed religious missionary labours, and with them, efforts at social amelioration, such as, temperance association, bands of hope, schools for promoting moral and religious education amongst girls and boys, the gathering of weighty medical opinions for raising the marriageable age in Hindu society, and the publication of cheap and healthy vernacular journals for the masses.

Keshub was a gifted man, and the gift of eloquence was not the least. He cultivated his mind and spirit but unhappily paid no attention to the preservation of his body, and I believe in his later days denied himself the care, necessary for his health. I do not make this observation in a carping spirit. But who would not have wished him a prolonged life ? There was much work to be done on earth.

Keshub communed with his Maker, and his prayers brought him inspiration, strength, and sweetness. Those, who might be supposed to know more of him, go farther in their idea of him. Not having that privilege, I have contended myself with adoring him as a man, with great talents, piety, and spiritual fervour, which he consecrated to the services of God and humanity. In him was united the spiritual detachment of the East and the instinct for the organised social service of the West.

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SOME STRAY THOUGHTS ON A VOLUME  
OF  
KESHUB CHUNDER SEN'S  
"LECTURES IN INDIA."

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BY K. J. SAUNDERS

*January 12, 1913*

SOME five years ago, I strolled into a book shop in Oxford to spend an hour, indulging my favourite extravagance—picking up second-hand books and enjoying the fusty atmosphere. This is an acquired taste and only the "book worm" thrive in such surroundings. But I am a worm of this species and I find more pleasure in the sombre company of old books, than in the bewildering variety and splendid bindings of an up to date modern shop. Here is all brisk's and haste, but there is quite and the leisurely search for some old favourite, or the joy of discovery of some old writing upon one's pet subject.

Only leisurely and reverent souls would come here, who love books for their own sake and have time to search for what they want and to honour the shadows of the mighty dead. A Hindu gentleman of Madras is wont, I am told, when the fever and stain of life become irksome to go into his nice sanctum and draw peace and inspiration from the pictures of great men, with which it is hung. The chosen ones, through whom, as Keshub Chunder Sen used to say, God revealed Himself, to the unselfish, sincere and potent torch bearers of our race.

And such a temple of the departed is an old bookshop, for him who has the eye to see.

It is full too of living human interest. As you stand there in the shadow you may see much to



delight and much to touch you, much of the honour and the pathos of life ; here the old scholar, as he eagerly discovers some rare editions, to turn reluctantly away because of other claims upon his slender purse ; there the victory of friendship over prudence, as he buys for another what he cannot afford for himself.

Such scenes. I have often witnessed ; and one old school-master of mine comes vividly before me as I write, a scholar and a saint, whose friends, almost all, possessed some such token of his affection, who lived largely in the past, yet counted it his greatest joy to share that past with his friends—to introduce one friend to another, as it were.

And as I plan to speak of Christ to my Brahmo friends who may read these words I would ask them to think of me thus—seeking as one who has found treasure to share it with others, seeking to introduce them to a friend.

Another scene I recall : a little old secondhand bookshop kept by a blind boy. He was not attractive to look at, long and lank, with a shrill voice and emaciated restless hands. But they were sensitive and quick as though gifted with sight, and with their help he could do things, which sound incredible. I remember taking to him a copy of Thucydido's to sell—largely to test his powers : " No use " he piped, as his long fingers skimmed the pages : " it is the German editor of 189—, and you have written in the margins. Besides it is blotted here and there " I remember going away, awed at this heroic spirit who had conquered so many difficulties in arriving at this wonderful skill ; yet we school boys would laugh at him ! Surely he had imbibed some of the greatness of the mighty dead in whose temple he served.

It was in such a spot that I first met the spirit of

Keshub Chunder Sen. Picking up a volume of his Lectures in India I noticed that it was from the library of Sir William Hunter and had his autograph notes. This made me decide to buy it and very soon I was reading it for its own sake, and coming to realize that here was a teacher from whom I might learn much, of the mysterious land, to which I was going, of her spiritual and national aspirations, of her search for God, of her estimate of Christ.

And I have often been glad that I went into that shop. For I realize that Keshub Chunder Sen can stand the tests, he himself laid down for great men,—he was sincere, and unselfish and strong; above all he was a man of prayer, and to that chiefly he owed his great influence.

Now as I look back I remember smiling at the quaint title of one of the lectures "Am I an Inspired Prophet?" and yet it was not so fantastic as I just thought it ; for he answered like John the Baptist "No ;" and yet like the Christ "I have no life apart from my Father's work. " And this work, he said, as the salvation, moral, social and religious of his beloved India.

It seemed, as I read on to find in him a reaching out after the mysterious Truth of the social nature of the God-head ; a recognition that if God be love, indeed, He must be more than the God of the Unitarian ; and as Keshub called him Father and Mother- I know that this idea expressed also his sense of the kinner protecting, enveloping Love of God ; but I feel there is more in it than that—nothing less than the guidance of the Holy Spirit leading him on to deeper Truth.

I learn too that what inspired the great reformer to endure hardness, and to preserve and inform his enthusiasm with such insight was the Mind of

Christ, which he so reverently studied ; and his propaganda was essentially Christian.

We who acknowledge Christ as Lord and God have cause to rejoice in the work of Keshub Chunder Sen, for we have learnt much much from him ; and we feel many of us that this seeker after Truth is now rejoicing in the " Light that lighteth every man," of whom he spoke so feelingly and so devoutly.

" For twenty years have I cherished him in my miserable heart. Though often defiled and persecuted by the world, I have found sweetness and joy unutterable in my master Jesus is not to me a hard doctrine.....The mighty artillery of his love he levelled against me, and I was vanquished, and I fell at his feet saying " Blessed child of God, hence shall others see the light that is in thee " ?..... Seek then the fine light of hevaen humbly and prayerfully, and the Lord will vouchsafe it unto you in the fullness of Time. " \*

To Christians this means (and I sap with all sympathy to men who do not feel as we do) that Jesus Christ is the full revelation of God's nature. As I read the words of the great preacher I feel that in his consciousness God and Jesus had almost become synonymous ; that he thought only of God as he found Him in Christ ; that God was to him, as for us, a Christlike God. I like to think of him and of other great sons of India, with Gautama Buddha at their head, learning even now to know the Divine Love in Christ. " The eternal progress of the Soul " means nothing else to me—than progress in what alone worth having—Friendship, human and Divine ; eternal because in God are depths unsearchable, progress because. " They who wait upon Him shall renew their strength."

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\* India Asks : Who is Christ.

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## SRI KESHUB CHUNDER SEN: HIS MESSAGE TO MODERN INDIA.

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ADDRESS BY PRINCIPAL T. L. VASWANI, M.A.,  
OF THE "NAVA VIDHAN."

*January, 12, 1913.*

THAT great American teacher who was in tune with the soul of the East and whom we revere, as Emerson gave a remarkable address in the year 1838; in the course of that speech Emerson used words to the following effect,—“I look,” said Emerson, “I look for the new teacher, that shall see the world to be the mirror of the soul, who shall see the identity of the Law of Gravitation with purity of heart, and shall show that duty is one with science with Beauty and with joy.” These words were spoken in the year 1838. In the ancestral home of the world’s religious consciousness was born a new teacher—one who discerned the synthesis of science and life, of faith and philosophy, of work and worship, of East and West and of all races and all religions, and all prophets and all scriptures in the One Eternal Parent-Spirit whose vision is beauty, love and joy; and concerning that teacher I propose to speak a word or two to you this evening. Wondrous are the ways of Providence. How I studied Keshub Chunder first in a spirit of curiosity, how curiosity passed into criticism, and how criticism was changed into admiration, how admiration was deepened into affectionate reverence. His is a story too personal to be told here; yet one thing, I need must say, is that as year after year has passed by and as I have studied more and more of contemporary life and culture, the

thought has grown on me that the message of Keshub Chunder Sen is a message admirably suited to satisfy the profoundest needs of the modern age ; and I can wish for no higher privilege than this ; to carry Keshub's message to my countrymen—to carry Keshub's message till I die. The one thing with which I have been struck in my studies concerning the life of this teacher is the *inevitable* impression he made on all who came in contact with him. Keshub's was a dynamic personality. Max Muller spoke of Keshub as having "the first place among his countrymen and a pre-eminent place among the best of mankind." Another spoke of him as "one of the greatest men of the world." That great teacher of whom I have often spoken to students of Philosophy—the late James Martineau whom I revere as a saint of modern theism—James Martineau recorded his impression of Keshub Chunder Sen in words very suggestive ; he spoke of Keshub Chunder Sen as a soul "the most congenial to Jesus." Not a few have spoken of him as having his place among the prophets of the world, he loved rather to speak of himself as a servant of the Prophets, and interpreter of the great brotherhood of the world-teachers ; he loved to speak of himself but as a dust-gatherer of the feet of the blessed ones over whom are outspread the white wings of the Holy Spirit. But he too was a Prophet of the ideal. Note how there seemed to go out of him a spiritual force which moved India. He came to the Punjab ; most of you are too young to know what impression he produced upon the people of this land. He went to Bombay and new centres of activity and reformation sprang up. He went to Madras ; a new life came and flowed into the people there ; he went to different towns of Bengal carrying still in his hands the torch of truth and a

new spirit descended upon the people. The young men felt the fascination of his sacred personality, and they saw the beauty of Higher Hinduism, and they entered into fellowship with Buddha and Christ, and they got a new insight into the faith and teaching of the great Prophet whose name is associated with the beginning and building up of Islamic Civilization. What was the secret of the man? It was, I believe that which the *Statesman* of Calcutta wrote "when Keshub speaks the world listens." What was the secret of the great influence which Keshub exerted upon his people? He was not a great theologian; he was not a great philosopher, he was not a system builder; he was not a scientist; he did not read much: on one occasion he said that he studied but one book in 365 days. Yet this man exerted such a powerful influence on those that came in contact with him: what was the secret of the man? Let me indicate, in brief, my answer to this question. Keshub Chunder Sen's was a *surrendered life*. From time to time in his private talk and public address he said that there was in his soul a *great voice*. He heard it, he said. He spoke of it as *Adesh*. Critics, wise in their conceit, questioned this teaching and called him names; he continued to bear witness to the voice within. Students of philosophy will remember how Plato in his "Dialogue," refers to the Dæmon of Socrates; that great teacher of antiquity spoke, from time to time, of a *spirit* in his heart: Socrates said how, in many emergencies of life, he consulted the Dæmon: and those of you who have read the 'Bhagawad Gita' will remember one very beautiful expression:—The *Sabha Brahman* the word of the Lord; and as we are beginning to-day, to know more and more of the latent side of human personality—as we are beginning to-day to study more and more of the wonders of human life

as disclosed to us by 'new' Psychology, we feel the force of the beautiful remark of Myers that man is in contact with a larger environment, the wider consciousness. You see a number of things now; you see the walls; you see the light; you see me speaking to you and I see you listening to me; you are in contact with the world; but remember each one of us is in contact with a *wider consciousness*. Don't you sometimes note how suggestions, influences, impulse come to you? Perhaps you are listening to the words of a preacher and you feel an impulse; you hear some strains of music and all of a sudden a feeling enters your heart—a suggestion, a glimpse, a hint of a glory you cannot define. Perhaps you felt the living touch of a friend, a brother a mother, of some elder, the touch of some pure and lofty soul and all of a sudden a strange impulse came to you; you said to yourself "We belong to the Unseen." Now these suggestions, these glimpses, these hints of a higher life come to us because we are in contact with a wider consciousness; and they who bring messages to us from this larger Environment of a Wider Consciousness they become Prophets, sages, teachers, masters of wisdom, interpreters of the high and the holy ideal, of life. Sri Keshub Chunder Sen speaks over and over again concerning this *contact of a man with a wider consciousness*. He tells us in his 'Autobiography' called the 'Jeevan Veda'—a book which I should recommend every young man to read—Keshub tells us how in the early period of his soul-growth he had no satisfaction till through prayer and worship he began to develop the sense of the unseen and was brought in contact with wider consciousness. So that the first great message which Keshub Chunder Sen has for you youngmen! you in whom are centered the hopes of New India—the first great message to you is to develop the *inward vision*.

Keshub calls us to the Inward Vision. They speak, to day, of "reformed" theology. Reformed theology, 'forward movement' in theology has its place in the programme of modern life ; but, remember, mere theology cannot satisfy the craving of the heart. We stand in need not alone of a forward movement but also of an *inward movement* of the soul. We think of reconstructing our theology. I am glad of it. But let us remember that something more than a *new theology* is needed. A *new apprehension of the contact of the soul with God* is the need of the modern age. The Churches in East and West are overwhelmed with overgrowths of externalism ; democracy is developing dangerous tendencies to unethical secularism ; the dominating civilisations of the world are commercial ; the problem of modern life has become very perplexing. How may the problem be solved ? Political solution is inadequate ; mere economic solution of the problem is inadequate ; for many of these evils, economic, social or political, are due to the fact that we have ignored that great truth, that society or state is a *spiritual organism* ; we have ignored the truth of *sacrificial love*. Remember that the task of the twentieth century is to *build up a brotherly civilization* ; and in order that this task may be accomplished, it is necessary that leaders of public life should be men of great Character and great Faith, men whose lives are in contact with the larger life of the Spirit. Keshub spoke with the power of an Eastern sage and the passion of an Eastern Prophet : he spoke as one with authority because he spoke with the *original insight of the soul*, and in listening to him the people felt they listened to a *Voice*—the living voice of a soul in daily contact with the living Lord. That voice is not dead, but to me an humble interpreter, a devout disciple of the great Teacher,—to me, no less than



to you, the voice of Keshub Chunder speaks to-day calling us to the Inner Vision and asking us to realise those deeper values of life, which are the soul of true progress. Note the second point concerning Keshub's message. Keshub Chunder Sen's life was not only a life of devotion and worship and prayer; it was also a life of tremendous activity. Keshub endeavoured to *transform the vision into activity*; he laboured for the advancement of India. Just because he had the Vision of the larger life, his soul burnt with a longing to communicate that vision to India so that India might be transformed. Keshub loved India, and had a true appreciation of her past. Read his great address, the last great utterance "Asia's message to Europe." It is a beautiful address; Keshub speaks with the voice of a great patriot, concerning the world broad mission of the East. Yes; Keshub believed that India had, under God's providence, to play a great part in the Council of Nations. Keshub loved India and appreciated her ancient past; but he did not ignore the *ideal of humanity*. He was not blind to the needs of modern life; he felt that India must be *re-generated*; he realised the value of the culture and higher consciousness of the West; he desired that East and West should co-operate in the building of a new India, a new Social order, and a new Civilisation. May I in this connection invite your attention to what Keshub considered as the formative factors of Nation building? The first thing, which he thought was essential to the building up of a Great Indian Nation, was that the *spirit of toleration* must grow in India. He found that in India had been brought together lines drawn from different prophets of the world; many races, many religions had met together in India, and from time to time he preached the truth that we must not emphasise

points of difference but points of affinity and contact ; he desired that we should enter into a sympathetic apprehension of the truths of the great religions of the world' He himself approached the great religions of the world in this spirit, and he came upon a great discovery that the religions of the world are not rivals but members of one spiritual organism in the providential evolution of the Race. The longer I stay in your midst the more I feel that there are sectarian strifes and denominational divisions in the Punjab ; and I desire therefore to tell you to night that the right way to help India is to still sectarian strifes. Recognise the truth that all religions are of the breath of God's inspiration, that all Scriptures speak of the One, though some speak of the One as *Hari* and some as *Allah*. Many indeed the *names*, but the *sentiment* is one ; many the ways but one the Law, the law of service, fellowship and Faith. The second factor in nation-building is *aspiration after progress*. Keshub spoke of the greatness and glory of ancient Aryavarta ; he spoke of the ancient spiritual ideal of the Hindu Race ; but, remember, he also felt that we must be modern with the modern. He realised the great *need* of India. I yeild to none in my reverence, affection and ardour, to the sages and seers of Aryavarta, but when I see people speak to-day of the past saying "we are proud of the *Rishis* of Aryavarta" I feel constrained to ask "are the *Rishis* proud of you ?" My friend ! think of this. It will not do simply to rest upon the glories of the past : recognise that India has fallen, and let your watchword be "Onward", "Forward", "Upward". „Homeward", "Heavenward"

This brings us to the third factor in nation-buildnig. I may refer to it as *Sociation*, What is Sociation ? Sociation is the desire for *Social Trans-*

*formation*, and Keshub laboured hard for social transformation. He worked for the improvement of the condition of India's woman; he felt that the women were the pillars of society; he introduced new methods of education: he believed that *nation-building* was *character-building*; he formulated a scheme of social order which meant the death of caste or class-consciousness. Young men! here is a great work for you. Let each one of you make up his mind to do something for the uplift of India's women.

I have spoken from different platforms of India's young men, and as I have looked into their intellectual countenance, I have desired,—how ardently,—that some hearts may be moved to purer service of the daughters of India.

Keshub Chander Sen tried to do something for India's young men. He believed in the power of education, he organised institution—for training girls and boys. He believed in the power of education; he desired that education should become a diffusive influence among the motley millions of India. Unfortunately we have neglected the masses, but the great *organiser* of the Brahmo Samaj felt for the masses. He spoke, in the great squares of Calcutta, to thousands and thousands of those who did not understand a word of English. And when the last earth-remains of him, whom we revere, were being carried to the burning *ghat*, it was these unlettered, uneducated men and women who wept the most. He created cheap literature for the masses; he carried the torch of truth to small towns and villages. Keshub Chander Sen has laid a great burden upon all who revere him as a prophet of the Ideal. Remember my friends, if the Brahmo Samaj is to be raised to a higher plane of things something must be done. There must be, in the first place, a deeper spiritualisation of the Brahmo

Samaj; there must be, in the second place, a yearning to share the noble life with other; the Samaj must aim at producing *social transformation*; the *personal* religion of the Brahmo Samaj must be socialised. A new social energy must be generated; a greater effort must be put forth for a new moulding of India's environment. Professor Bastian was taking, some years ago, the Philosophical Society of Berlin through the ethnological museum of that great city; and as he took the members through the museum he told them a number of things bearing upon the development of the mind from the state of savagery to the state of civilisation and pointed out how in the early period of man's development, man was subjected to the *control* of nature, and then Professor Bustian went on to make a very suggestive remark. He said that if in the lower stages of man's development, man was subjected to the control of Nature, in the higher stages—and that was a point of importance to note—in the higher stages man began to develop the *ability to overcome his environments*. Young men! there is an important idea for you to note. You have to develop the power to overcome the environments. You have the power—may I not call it a Creative Power—to build up a better social environment for India? Such then is the message of Sri Keshub Chunder Sen, it is the message of a *new life* to which you were called, to which the modern age is called. I am reminded of an incident, I read sometimes ago in a book written by Hearne whose name may be familiar to you. Hearne was a great American and worked for many years as the professor of English literature in the Tokio University of Japan. He tells us how one day he asked his class in 'Composition' to write an essay on:—"What is eternal in literature?" Many answers were proposed to this.

question. But one answer ran thus:—"The eternal in literature is the life of patriots and of those who have given pure moral maxims to the world;" and one of these young men, to whom this question was proposed by the American professor, rose to be a great General. We are told that when this Japanese, who became a great General, was a little boy he was taken by his mother to the worship house and the mother laid this boy in worship-house and offer this prayer:—"Lord! Accept my little boy as sacrifice." The sacrifice was accepted, and the boy became one of the great builders of his nation. How many Indian mothers are there who are filled with his spirit of service and of love? Sir William Hunter said that there were about 50 millions of people in India who could not earn more than Rs 4 a month, and I am afraid the number is larger still. Do you know that there are millions in India to-day who find no work and day after day they go without meals? They cannot earn even four rupees per month.

In the city of Bombay the average number of people in a room is 25. Think of 25 persons being huddled together under one roof! and you know there are a good many who do not even find such a place where to rest; they have to sleep in the open and the result is they catch cold and malaria; and do you know how year after year many perish, in this ancient land of plague and of cholera? Do you know that there are in different parts of India many, that we speak of, as submerged classes, men whose very shadow is supposed to pollute the person upon whom the shadow may be cast? Young men! the average labourer in India is not paid even one shilling per day. I remember having read some years ago a beautiful little incident in the biography of a great saint. A voice of the Lord came to the

saint one day and the saint asked :—" Lord ! Master ! I hear Thy voice, but I have not Thy vision ; where art Thou O Lord !" and the answer came, " My son, I am down among the people." Yes, the Lord is down among the people. It is these poor down-trodden classes of the Indian soil that shall make a New India ; and rest assured if you cannot re-organise institutions for the uplift of these motley millions you have lived in vain. We are living in an age of great crisis, and the one voice, the sacred voice of Keshub Chunder Sen summons us all to a pure service of the People of this Ancient land.

Such then is the meaning to my mind of the life and work of Sri Keshub Chunder Sen. He spent himself in the service of India, and it is in the fitness of things that we should meet together to pay our tribute to the man who loved and laboured for the land. Keshub kindled a new consciousness of the historic mission of India ; and his own life is an atturance that God has something rich in store for this Ancient Land. I am not here to impose on you the creed of my church or the ontology of my faith. But speaking to you as an Indian to brother Indians, I fain would say :—have faith in India's future, and let your love be not a softness of the heart, but sober practical loyalty to the spiritual ideal of life, life which may be expressed in deeds of service. Filled with reverence for humanity, recognising the higher harmony of East and West, work and labour for the land. Build India for a great future ; so usher in the day, which may give us another Keshub Chunder Sen who may inaugurate another era in the progress of beloved India. We may not live to see the day when may be verified Keshub's vision of a New India ; but if we keep alive the sense of the Unseen and are quickened to a purer service of Man, then surely

our children and our children's children will see the Blessed Day. In that day shall India realise the fruit of Keshub's labours, and witness the victory of Keshub's Ideal. Then shall the world see her shot in splendour, and the Nations of the West give her a high and honoured place in the Parliament of Man. The benedictions which rest on her will, then, be renewed; and the God of Nations will place the Crown on her hoary head. He has long reserved for her, and India shall enter upon her historic mission;—India shall be a standard-bearer of the Cult of the Spirit: India shall be a servant of the Human Race.

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KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

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BY SIR ANDREW FRASER.

*March 30, 1913.*

THE life and writings of Keshub Chunder Sen are of exceptional interest to me. They call forth my warm admiration and my deepest sympathy. He inherited a goodly heritage; and he enlarged and beautified it. Raja Ram Mohun, the great founder of Brahmoism, left behind him ideas which will never pass away in India, and which were the basis of the faith and work of Keshub Chunder Sen. Ram Mohan was a man of broad view and wide human sympathy. He had a full appreciation of the advantage which India already owes to, and must still derive from, its Providential association with England. He had a deep conviction of the pure and exalted character

of Christian ethics, at the same time, he was devotedly attached to Indian ideals. His death in England in 1833 was a great loss to India, for he had been among the foremost of those who strove for its social intellectual, and moral advancement.

His place as leader of the Samaj was, about eight years later, taken by Debendra Nath Tagore, a young man full of earnestness and consecration but narrower in his views and less free from the trammels of Hindu observance. At first he adopted 'the *Vedas* alone as the standard of our faith ;' but after a careful examination of them by four scholars whom he sent to Benares for the purpose, he "bade farewell to Vedantism" in 1850. He and his colleagues were thrown back on Nature Religion, and found the sources of the knowledge of God in Nature and Intuition. They believe in a personal God, hearing and answering prayer, to be worshipped in spiritual way by men of all castes and races, who know God through nature and intuition, and obtain forgiveness and salvation through repentance and turning away from sin.

In 1857, Keshub Chunder Sen joined the Samaj. His spirituality and prayerfulness, as well as the amiability of his character, won the heart of Debendra. They loved one another with a love which even subsequent dissension and separation could not extinguish; and they were for years earnest fellow-workers in the cause of progress. But Keshub soon pushed ahead of his friend, both in respect of the wider sphere which the former aimed at in his great idea of a Samaj for the whole of India, and in regard to certain Hindu views—respecting, for example intercaste marriages, the remarriages of widows and the use of the sacred thread—which Debendra could not give up. As he insisted on giving effect to these views, Keshub and his adherents separated



from him in February 1865. The old Samaj seems then to have gone to sleep; and progress lay with the new.

At first Kesaub devoted himself to rallying supporters throughout India, and to delivering lectures setting forth the Brahmo views and his own conception of "Jesus Christ: Europe and Asia," he made a great point of the fact that the Christ was an Asiatic, and strongly and earnestly appealed to "Europeans and Asiatics alike" to render obedience to the teaching of Christ, and "to establish and consolidate the moral kingdom of Christ in India." Then on 11th November 1866 he held a meeting to inaugurate the new Society. Along with the usual prayers and hymns, there were read passages from the Christian, Confucian, Hindu, Muhammeden and Zoroastrian Scriptures, to indicate the eclectic nature of the rational faith he aimed at. The new society was to embrace Brahmos throughout India: people of both sexes, accepting its fundamental principles, were to be members; and mottoes and maxims from the religions of all nations were to be collected for their use. He began to teach clearly the Fatherhood of God, and the love and honour we owe to one another as children of the common Father. The new Somaj stood in closer relation than ever to Christianity, and imitated many of its practices in the Sunday services, which now took the place of those held hitherto on Wednesdays.

Before very long, opposition to the great leader began to show itself. His views regarding "Great Men," as a third source of the Intuition, awakened jealousy and suspicion; and his autocratic position, and claim to be under the actual guidance of God at critical moments in his career, roused opposition. Then the Cooch Behar marriage, in which his minor

daughter was given, not without some idolatrous ceremony, to the attractive ruler of that State (also a minor), gave his opponents their opportunity. They demanded his deposition; and, a new Samaj. The old missionaries stood by Keshub; but a large body of intelligent and influential men, and the great majority of the provincial Samajes, combined to form the "Sadharan Brahmo Samaj." This was a great blow to the cause that Keshub had at heart; but he held his way undaunted. His views further developed, especially in regard to his relation to Christianity.

Keshub's lecture, "India asks, who is Christ?" delivered on the 9th April 1879 (the year after the separation) went nearer to the Christian view of the Christ than he had ever gone before. "Jesus," he said, "came down in all His glory from heaven to teach us sonship or true loyalty to the Father. . . . It was not the Father that came to dwell amongst us, but His beloved son, who was one with Him, because He was made of Divine humanity. Not the Father was made flesh, but the "word" that was with Him, the life, the truth of the son that was in Him, was made flesh. Thus it is that Christ existed in God before He was created. There is an uncreated Christ, as also the created Christ, the idea of the son and the incarnate son drawing all His vitality and inspiration from the Father. This is the true doctrine of incarnation. Take away from Christ all that is Divine all that is God's: no Christ remains." This long quotation is worth giving; for it is characteristic in its religious fire, in its want of systematic local structure. A great friend of Keshub's declared his conviction that the latter had become a Christian before his death; but, though such utterances \* as these may seem to justify this belief, he certainly never professed Christianity. His

own statement is that we must "outgrow the popular types of narrow Christian faith and merge in the vastness of Christ."

Keshub died on 8th January 1884, after living to see those who had separated from him (form themselves into an organised body with more of the appearance) in Indian than his own Somaj. For indeed the members of the latter were too much dependent on his own personality to be very likely to stand well when distance or death deprived them of his influence. His was a great personality : not intellectual greatness or wonderful oratory alone, not even his amiable character, but his prayerfulness, his devotional spirit, his deep moral and religious nature made, him a power with men. I believe, with him, that the Christ is coming to India. I wish, like him, to see the people of India "go forth, with the enthusiasms and joy which all oriental nations display upon such occasions to receive the Bridegroom." I am convinced, as he was that the Christ will yet be supreme in India, but that the future religion of India will be Indian and not Western. His life, despite all that of sorrow and disappointment was in it, came far to the attaining of this goal : there is one more step to be taken in God's good time.

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\* Compare his statement made later regarding the doctrine of the Trinity : "The Father, the son and the Holy Ghost ; the Creator, the exemplar the sanctified, I am, I love, I save ; the still God the journeying God, the Returning God. . . . Sat, Chit, Ananda ; Truth, Intelligence, Joy "

**MINISTER KESHUB CHUNDER SEN,—  
AN APPRECIATION.**

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**BY SIR R. N. MUKERJEE.***January II, 1914.*

THE enormous benefit, social, moral and spiritual, that Minister Keshub Chunder Sen and his preachings conferred on the people of Bengal can hardly be over-rated. At about that time English education had just been promulgated, and the effect of such an education on the batches of graduates who came from the colleges, was to shake thier faith in the Orthodox religion and its beliefs with a consequent weakening of their amenability to ancient social customs, and the educated youth of Bengal drifted into a state of complete spiritual chaos. The Christian Missionaries failed to step into the breach thus created, and without the restraining influence of some form of religion, youthful Bengal was not slow to acquire most of the vicious habtis of the West and by reason of their previous abstinence to suffer from a particularly virulent attack of such vices. Excessive indulgence in alcohol with concomitant vices, was a natural consequence and the co-called educated Bengalees became a by-word amongst other members of the community. At that time the Brahmo religion, under the leadership of Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore, had but a feeble existence and could hardly hold its own against proselitizing zeal of the Christian Missionaries on the one hand and the sacerdotal influence with centuries of authority at its back on the other. Such the state of social life in Bengal when Keshub Chunder Sen made his first appearance in public life. From early childhood

Keshub had been distinguished for his unquenchable enthusiasm. He was essentially a zealot, and his strivings after reform and progress were ceaseless and tireless. But, amidst all his feverish and restless activities, the eloquent orator and the persuasive preacher stood out conspicuously prominent. Thus it was, he could move vast congregations to sobs and tears or inflame them with fiery zeal. I myself, had on many an occasion, the good fortune to hear him speak and had returned home stirred to the innermost depths of my heart. Even now, I can feel the thrill of pleasure I experienced, when I had the privilege of listening to him. It is, therefore, not a matter of great wonder that Keshub's success in organising the Theistic principle of the Brahmo Samaj in a regular religious system for the community was immediate and complete. His master mind had at once grasped the fact that to lead back "Young Bengal" to paths of virtue and morality, their sense of religion, which had been undermined by a superficial English education, must first be restored. To accomplish this, Keshub had not much difficulty, as he himself had not the least trace of bigotry in him but culled the best principles from every known religion of the times and organised them into a unique religious Dispensation of the world. This task once accomplished it was a matter of comparative ease to restore healthy, social and moral conditons into the community. Thus, it was, due to this great man that "Young Bengali" was saved from being not merely sceptic but scoffer of all religion and from leading a life of wild debauchery and reckless self-indulgence. It was a national calamity when Keshub passed away at the early age of forty five, without having time to securely consolidate the great task he had accomplished. It is a matter of still greater regret that disunion

has appeared amidst his followers and friends since his death and there has been no one who could unite them and thus show the greatest respect to the great preacher by making his work everlasting.

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

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BY REV. CHAS. S. PATERSON.

*January II, 1914.*

ONE of the reported sayings of Keshub Chunder Sen is this. "It is easy to distinguish a great man, but it is difficult to comprehend him." This very aptly expresses the attitude of many who have seen the effects of his influence on Bengali society, but never had the privilege of knowing him personally. All can distinguish that he was a great man, few can fully comprehend him or measure the extent of his influence. If one who admires the greatness may, at the Editor's request, record one or two impressions of Keshub Babu's life and work, it is done with a full appreciation of the difficulties and limitations involved.

Perhaps the most striking feature of his life to a Westerner was his entire independence of human guidance or help and his absolute confidence in his work as being a direct revelation from the Supreme Being. This was again and again revealed when he was in doubt or perplexity. At such times he did not seek society or counsels of men, but retired to that inner meditation and communion which he regarded as the source of this inspiration and the

origin of his strength. Born as he was into a generation living in the minds of intellectual turmoil and change, with the spread of Western education undermining and toppling over older beliefs, with the pendulum of the new spirit of intellectual liberty swinging over towards license and abuse he had need of some higher source of inspiration than the heterogeneous clamour of opinion that arose on all sides. And the absolute reality of this inspiration he never for a moment doubted although his own interpretation of it varied from time to time. Coupled with this was absolute fearlessness in following the guidance of this inner light. Lead where it might,—against popular prejudice, in the face of long established customs, in opposition to the advice of his revered elders or against the counsels of those in authority—he followed it unswervingly, showing neither fear nor hesitation in his intense desire to translate into fact those inner experience which he felt convinced, were to him the will of the Supreme. His was no man-made propaganda, no democratic solution of the wisdom of many heads, but a direct commission from one High to be carried out at all costs. How great those costs were, the outside world knows at least in part and yet never once did he falter or seek to draw back from the full responsibility of the crusade which he had assumed.

His intense enthusiasm and zeal cannot but command admiration. In a generation when self-indulgence had been an evil outgrowth of the expanding intellectual horizon, it needed a marvellous enthusiasm to make head-way against the inertia of indifference to personal obligation which seemed to have possessed the minds of the younger men. Combined with this was the intensified conservatism of the older generation which shrank from the excesses into which the young men were being drawn

together and these made a barrier of circumstances sufficient to discourage any attempt at a campaign against social laxity on the one hand and entrenched custom on the other. But Keshub Chunder Sen's zeal never seems to have flagged. Every known agency, Eastern or Western, was employed to further the reforms he had at heart. The theatre, the pulpit, tracts, newspapers, missionary journeys teaching in public and private,—all were employed with an enthusiasm which seemed to know no weariness and a fire which would not be quenched. As he himself once expressed it, "I am a worshipper of the religion of fire, I am partial to the doctrine of enthusiasm. To me a state of being on fire is the state of salvation." And this burning enthusiasm was characteristic in him that enabled him to carry on his marvelously diversified work,—work that time and again might have discouraged even the most stout-hearted of men.

There is not space to dwell on his prayer life. Starting from the simplest of untutored beginnings, its growth can be traced through his whole career until it blossomed out into the fully expanded flower of his mature spiritual life. Nor of the intense personal affection he commanded, by which men were brought out from all sorts and conditions of life to enlist under the banner of his cause. Neither is there room to dwell on the simplicity of his nature and habits of life which even at the time of his widest influence and greatest power retained as they had been from the beginning. His life seemed to be an almost perfect harmony of all that was best in Eastern learning and Western education and commands respect alike from the native born Indian and the peoples of the Western hemisphere.

Finally, his contribution to the literature of his country has not been insignificant. In simplicity,



richness and directness of thought, he has added to the style of his mother tongue an element that has been a distinct contribution. It has been said that he came through religion to literature and one cannot read his works without feeling that here heart speaks to heart and style and diction have become the perfected medium for the expression of the inmost longings of soul. Wherever truth is respected, wherever courage of conviction is esteemed, wherever men delight to pay homage to genius, there it will be deemed an honour to revere the memory of Keshub Chunder Sen. And these few thoughts are offered as simple flowers to be added to the garland that is being woven about his memory at this time.

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## REVIEWS AND SYMPATHIES FROM EUROPE.

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### PROFESSOR F. MAX MULLER ON KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

INDIA has lost her greatest son, Keshub Chunder Sen. His was one of the few names known not only most widely among the two hundred and fifty millions who are said to inhabit the vast Indian Empire, but familiar even to European ears. Many of us saw him during his stay in England in 1870, listened to him, admired and loved him, and not a few have ever since remained united with him by the bonds of a real friendship. If we look around for true greatness, not only in England or Europe, but in the whole civilized world, and if we try to measure such greatness, not by mere success or

popularity, but honestly, and, so to say, historically, taking into account the character of the work done and the spirit in which it was done, few, I believe, would deny that it was given to Keshub Chunder Sen to perform one of the greatest works in our generation, and that he performed it nobly and well. Like all great men, he had warm friends and bitter enemies. He himself was proud of both, and though fully aware of the greatness of the work committed to him, and quite conscious of his own worth and dignity, he far more frequently protested against exaggerated praise than against unmerited blame. No doubt the controversy between his followers and opponents will continue long after his death, nor is it likely that posterity will be more forbearing to his weakness than it has lately proved itself to be in the case of other religious reformers, such as Wicklif or Luther. But if we deduct an equal share on both sides—on the side of exaggerated praise as well as on the side of unmerited blame—there remains a sufficient amount of independent contemporary judgment to secure to Keshub Chunder Sen the first place among his fellow-countrymen, and a pre eminent place among the best of mankind.

After Ram Mohun Roy's death in 1833, the Church which he had founded under the name of the Brahmo-Samaj languished for a time for want of a head. It was chiefly supported, so far as its material wants were concerned, by Dvaraka Nath Tagore, who, like Rammohan Roy, died in England, and lies buried in Kensal green. More important support, however, came to the Brahmo Samaj from the son of Dvarakanath Tagore, Debendranath Tagore (born in 1818). He, being a young man of great wealth, suddenly, at the age of twenty, perceived the vanity of all earthly pleasures, and devoted the rest of his life to a search into his own being, and its relation to the Divine. He became the founder of the Tattvabodhini Sabha, the Truth-teaching Society, and became a member, and

soon the recognised leader, of the Brahmo Samaj. It was through his influence chiefly that the members of the New Church surrendered their belief in the revealed character of the Vedas. This was an enormous step in advance. The Brahmo Samaj then found itself a Church without a Bible, and Dabendranath Tagore, having nothing now between himself and his God, felt himself inspired with new life, full of new hopes and higher inspirations. Young men gathered round him, and among them the most eminent was Keshub Chunder Sen. He soon became the intimate friend of Dabendranath Tagore, who, being fond of solitude and retirement, left the management of the society and of its journal to Keshub Chunder Sen and his young companions. The young wine, however, proved too strong for the old bottles. Keshub Chunder Sen became more and more intolerant of all that partook of old leaven, and at last even his old friend, Dabendra Nath Tagore, had to break with his over-zealous pupil. The conservative members of the Brahmo Samaj were willing to give up all that was idolatrous and pernicious, but they would not surrender all their national customs. In spite of many efforts at reconciliation, the break came in 1866. Keshub Chunder Sen became the head of the new society, called the Brahmo-Samaj of India, while Dabendra Nath Tagore, remained the leader of what was now called the Adi Brahma-Samaj—namely, the first Brahmo-Samaj.

While Dabendranath Tagore, retired more and more from society, Keshub Chunder Sen's name has been before the world ever since. He and many of his followers gave up their secular employments, and became preachers, teachers, and missionaries. They published books of theistic texts, taken from all the sacred books of the world. They built a new prayer Hall, and their vigorous leader, by his marvellous eloquence, not only in Bengali, but in English, won thousands of hearts for his cause. New journals were started, new schools

opened, and great efforts made to raise the women of India so as to make them fit fellow-labourers in the cause of religious and social reform. Lastly, in 1870, came Keshub Chunder Sen's triumphant journey to England where he won the respect and love of hundreds and thousands from the highest to the lowest. His success was extraordinary; his speeches, as outburst of religious fervour, were quite as extraordinary as those of Kossuth's as specimens of political eloquence. After his return to India new troubles began. Those who knew him best—and I may mention the late Dean of Westminster as one of his staunchest friends to the very last—knew that his intentions were always good. What is called a new schism has taken place, and a society has been formed, called the Sadharan Samaj. At present these three Samajes are naturally opposed to each other, but to my mind, they seem only branches of one vigorous tree—the tree that was planted by Ram Mohan Roy. In different ways they all serve the same purpose, and tend to realise the dream of a new religion for India and for the new world, a religion freed from the corruptions of the past, call them idolatry or caste or verbal inspiration or priestcraft, and founded on a belief in one God, the same in the Vedas, the same in the Old, the same in the New Testament, the same in the Koran, the same also in the hearts of those who have no longer any Vedas between themselves and their God. Of late Keshub Chunder Sen's devotion to Christ seemed excessive to many of his friends in India and Europe. If he had lived in the first century he would have been the most loving disciple of the founder of our religion; living in the nineteenth, though he was more truly a Christian than hundreds or thousands who call themselves Christians, yet he would not join our ranks, but set himself the higher and harder task which he called the task of "Christainizing Christianity."

Though he died young, the work of his life was done, and his friend and probable successor, Protap Chunder Mazoomdar, at present travelling in America and Japan, will perhaps be better fitted, under present circumstances, to carry on the religious reform of India. But as long as there is a religion in India, whatever its name may be, the name of Keshub Chunder Sen will be gratefully remembered as one who lived and died for the glory of God, for the welfare of mankind, and for the truth, so far as he could see it.

[—B. Mozoomdar's " Prof. Max Muller on Ramkrishna, and the World on Keshub Chunder Sen " p.p. 117—119.]

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## A POEM FROM NEW YORK

A somewhat remarkable poem was sent from the other side of the Atlantic. The title of the phamplet is *The New Dispensation*. This is followed by a short dedication which runs as follows :—

*These Scriptures are dedicated*

TO

*That Great Prophet of the Spirit,*

Now passed into the Heavens,—

KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

" And I declare that since the sacred morn,  
Whose gracious light did herald Jesus' birth  
No brighter day did ever dawn for Man  
Than this : which to the eager waiting world,  
Brings the new Truth. It is the Brahmo Samaj,  
That best reveals the Spirit of the Christ.

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Great Chunder Sen is dead. Beauty and Light  
 And Power and Enthusiasms strange  
 Have passed with him ; and whither they have gone  
 There they remain, and there is Chunder Sen.  
 I saw that mighty prophet in a dream,  
 A dream of the great world that lies in sin,  
 Sorrow and darkness—And he stood—the form  
 Of some great visible angel in the night.  
 My heart was as an echo that replies  
 To some far Voice : I knew him and awoke.  
 O blessed above all the sons of Men !  
 O grand and lowly ! Gentle and divine  
 In Spirit and in Presence : Where art Thou ?  
 The immense world of Matter in whose breast  
 Thy body sleeps this moment knows thee not.  
 The void of the calm night : the endless path  
 Of the great stars ; the worlds that are Beyond  
 The Universe and all that sense declares,  
 Is as it was : and thou art in the grave ?  
 A smile is on my lips ; it is not so !  
 It is not so, and it cannot be thought.  
 Thou also art the same : and yet in Heaven.  
 For what is Heaven but that thy Spirit is !  
 Thy nature is thy Place. Inhabit it !  
 In freedom be thyself. Religious Man,  
 Long had I wished to look upon thy face ;  
 To see thee ; and to dedicate my book  
 To thee in life. What cause shall hinder now ?  
 None ; blessed Spirit ! though in time no more  
 Thou art become as that which thou did'st seek ;  
 And livest in every hope that thou inspirest :  
 My Teache still. Oh ! now I do not fear  
 That thou shalt perish : for thy very being  
 Was woven in the fabric of the Truths

That last. Of them a portion, Thou.  
 Let not the name of Death be mentioned here.  
 Nor let the thought of Time, nor passing Change,  
 Nor outward Distance, nor related Things inhabit here.  
 This, then is Life ; to see in hope and love,  
 Friendship and cheer, and poesy and joy,  
 A Divine Christ—the saviour of the World !  
 This, then, is Life : to reverence all Truth  
 Though it be uttered forth by foreign tongues :—  
 To see and know in all experience  
 The Word of God : To walk beneath the sun  
 As if we were the first who ever saw it ;  
 Children of Nature—every man an Adam !  
 This, then, is Life : to see the face of God  
 In all that maketh blessed human grief ;  
 O vainly, vainly, was it said of yore :  
 “ No man can see the Face of God and live : ”  
 This older Truth declares its greater self  
 Lo ! no man ever lived till he beheld it !  
 Thou, therefore, Prophet of these blessed truths  
 Though sunk below our narrow horizon  
 Remainst unrevealed ; till we, at last,  
 Shall mount the higher peaks of human life,  
 And then again will see thee in the light  
 That lies beyond the borders of the world !  
 Spirit that livest and art dead no more,  
 What is thy name ? O speak our hearts relieving ;  
 There is no sound except the rising roar  
 Of wandering winds through ancient heaven grieving.  
 Alas ! we're deaf and hear thee not  
 Though Thou aloud to us art crying :  
 O Christ of Life and human Thought  
 O'er earth to-night thy soul is sighing !  
 Spirit that livest and art dead no more,

Whence art thou come and where thy latest dwelling ?  
There is no sound : save that through heaven roar  
The solemn wind most mournfully is swelling,  
Aloud we'll cry to Heaven above  
" O cease ! ye winds, your loud complaining,  
The Christ of Joy and human love  
In all our hearts to-night is reigning. "  
Spirit that livest and art dead no more :  
Art thou the Christ or shall we seek another ?  
There is no sound : the strife of winds is o'er :  
On earth to-night, each man's a brother.  
Thou art the Soul of that great Change  
Which kings and tyrants stand confessing.  
O Christ of human nature—strange—  
Thou art to-night the world a—blessing ! Amen ! "

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VICE-CHANCELLOR REYNOLDS

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CONVOCATION ADDRESS, 1884  
CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

(*Extract*)

We meet now and then with a man, in whose character the various elements are so genially mixed, that while the powers of a capacious intellect are cultivated to their fullest development, soul remains as pure as the soul of a child, and the heart as tender as the heart of a woman. When such a man has the divine faculty of impressing others with the great truths which permeate his own soul, he becomes a leader of men, and *his*



*appearance inaugurates a new era in the spiritual and mental history of the world.* Such was Sakya-muni probably the greatest man whom this country has ever produced. But Sakyamuni, you will perhaps say, is a semi-mythical personage ; his age is too far removed from ours ; the conditions of modern life are different ; to us of the present day he is little more than an abstraction and a name. Well,—*this country has produced, in the present century, a man cast in a very similar mould,* a man who has lived and worked among us, whose features were familiar to us all, and whose words are still fresh in the memory of many who are present today. I will not attempt to determine the exact rank which history will assign to Keshab Chunder Sen in the noble band of thinkers, reformers, and philanthropists. The full measure of his greatness we of the present generation are perhaps unable to appreciate ; just as a traveller, standing at some mountain's foot, cannot truly estimate the height of the eminence which towers above him. On this point, the next age will form a more accurate judgment than is possible now. But I think we shall not err in saying that when the verdict of posterity is passed upon the life and work of Keshub Chunder Sen, *four characteristics in his career* will be marked out for prominent notice.

*First*, the marvellous harmony with which his mind united some of the noblest products of Western culture and civilization, with the depth and thoughtfulness of the Oriental intellect. *Secondly*, the just proportion which his temperament maintained between the domain of thought and the sphere of action. Penetrated as he was with the spirit of devotional religion, he was yet no visionary mystic, his periods of seclusion and meditation were but intervals in which he gathered inward strength for the active prosecution of the work to which his energies and his life were devoted. *Thirdly*, the catholic spirit which led him to recognise the germs of truth in all

religious systems, and to assimilate the loftiest and most ennobling principles of them all, *Fourthly*, the generous and large-hearted charity which made his career a crusade against all forms of ignorance, oppression and wrong. The amelioration of suffering, the extension of education, the advocacy of temperance, the discouragement of child-marriage, the emancipation of the Hindu women—these were the *practical aims by which he sought to lighten the burdens and elevate the condition of those around him*, no less than by the speculative truths of the pure and lofty theism which he taught.

I have dwelt at some length upon this topic, partly because, in such an assembly as this, it is natural to refer to so momentous an event as the death of *one of India's noblest sons*, and also because the subject is one which seems to me not inappropriate to the occasion which has called us together today. For, though much of Keshub Chander's greatness was peculiarly his own, the distinctive character of his teaching was largely influenced by his education and training. It is a rare thing for a great religious reformer to be a tolerant man. A religious former must be thoroughly in earnest; and a thoroughly earnest man, from the depth of his own convictions, is apt to be impatient with those who differ from him, and to be blind to the merits of any other system than his own. The breadth of view which distinguished Keshub Chunder Sen, the catholicity of mind which gave him earnestness without intolerance, and faith without dogmatism, was due (if I mistake not) to his study of history, to his knowledge of the rise and progress of other theological systems, to his acquaintance with the phenomena of religious thought in other ages and other countries. He was an illustrious example of that culture which it is the aim and the end of this University to foster, the development of the Eastern mind through the science and the literature of the West.

And there is another reason why before such an audience as is gathered here today, I should speak of the great man whom India has lost. *The life of Keshub Chunder is a pledge and an assurance that Providence has yet a great destiny in store for this land.* The age and the country which has produced such a man may well look forward with hopeful anticipation to the next scene of the drama in which he played so distinguished a part. But it is not enough merely to wait and to hope. It remains for you, the students of this generation, to follow in his footsteps, students, to complete his work, to show yourself worthy to be called his fellow-countrymen !

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PANDIT SHIVANATH SHASTRI.

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KESHUB ANNIVERSARY MEETING ADDRESS  
SCOTISH CHURCH COLLEGE, CALCUTTA.

8th January, 1910.

(Translated from Bengali.)

IN every Yuga when religious fervour in human societies gets rusty and the result is the predominance of wicked activities and sinful acts the Heavenly Father sends the prophets to get those societies cleansed of those evils. The readers of histories of different nations will find many instances of these things. It is known to the readers of the history of Palestine, that it was an evil time for that country when the Romans extended their dominions into that holy land. With the advent of foreign rule, the wickedness and the depravity of the conquering nations penetrate into the character and society of the conquered people. Thus for this and other reasons the condition of the people of Palestine reached the most miserable stage.

The advent of Jesus Christ was to work the deliverance of these unfortunate beings. Jesus found that national character of the country had gone down to the most disgraceful and the lowest level, and it was not an easy task to free the people from such calamity.

The cancer had bred in the bone and effective treatment was necessary. A building could be put in order by two ways, *viz.*, *firstly*, by effecting petty repairs; *secondly*, by building anew, superficial mendings do not commend to them. Expert physicians are not satisfied with checking the outer symptoms only, but they direct their attention to effect radical cure. Similarly, the real healers of the human failings do not like to have only some superficial reforms. They, by the grace of God, being blessed with keen insight, would dive deep to find out the real cause of all iniquities and labour for eradicating the very root cause of all such mischiefs. They are for wholesale reforms.

Jesus said thus.

"Love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thy heart and with all thy mind and with all thy strength. If love for God grows in man's heart then all sorts of vitiations disappear."

The centre Humanity can be divided into four classes :

- (1) Those given to luxury and indulgence of senses.
- (2) Those who pride themselves on knowledge and intellect.
- (3) Ascetics.
- (4) Prophets and Apostles.

During Jesus's time the people of Judia belonged to the first three classes. The ascetic John the Baptist used to rebuke those who were addicted to vices and those who were hypocrites and religious impostors.

The prophet ( Jesus ) saw that it would not do to condemn only luxury and religious conceit, but something must be done to enable man to reach the feet of God and to taste and enjoy eternal happiness and peace. So by his own life and death he has presented an example before the world of what was madness in love for God.

Such is the case in every part of the world. In Arabia Mohammad was born for this mission. When there were moral and spiritual degradations in the North-West India there was the advent of Nanak. When Bengal was pervaded with utter darkness Sri Chaitanya was sent by Providence. Again after another four hundred years there came another dark age in Bengal and there was the advent of some other Great Men. The one (Keshab) to whom we have assembled here to show respect today belongs to such a class of Great Men. In early youth he (Keshab) forsook all desires for worldly enjoyments and floated the bark of life on the stream of God's love.

There cannot be any doubt that Keshab, a grandson of Ramkamal Sen, could easily have worldly honour and position had he wanted them.

His guardian had placed him in an humble situation in the Bank of Bengal. There he after attending to his office work used to utilise his leisure in thinking over means for the welfare of his motherland. It was at this time that he published his tract "Young Bengal, This Is For You." He began to present new ideas before his countrymen.

There is no room for doubt that if he had cared he could have occupied one of the top-most places in the Bank of Bengal. But he did not go that way at all.

It was the will of Providence that through Keshab He would bring about the deliverance of India, put new life to its lifeless society. So Keshab gave up

his worldly activities and dedicated his life to fructify the great mission of his life.

Giving up all the pleasures and happiness of the world he absolutely threw himself into the hands of God. The result was that he was turned out from his family house.....was forsaken by his associates in religion and was persecuted by the public. But in spite of all these cruel treatments he exhibited marvellous forbearance and forgiveness and absolute dependence on God. In all these rested his greatness.

*(Keshab As Seen By His Opponents. p.107. )*

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PT. SHIVANATA SHASTRI

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MAGHOTSAB ADDRESS—SADHARAN BRAHMO  
SAMAJ, CALCUTTA, JANUARY 1910

*(Translated from Bengali)*

Keshab's contribution to the Brahmo Samaj is an invaluable asset and the more we think of it, the more we feel that he should have a lasting place in the history of the Brahmo Samaj.

His first teaching is that God dwells in the righteousness of man. In other words, to worship Him by words or rites is not enough but to reject falsehood in speech, activity and life and to accept truth; to do away with wrong and to establish the right, to disassociate with unholiness and to adopt purity—all these lead to the worship of God. A Brahmo should not rest content with simply the abolition of idol-worship and the introduction of the worship of the Infinite, but he is to recognise the presence of God in his

conscience and is to follow His dictates (*adesh*) in conscience at all places, times and stages of life.

By precept and example of Keshab Chandra, this conception of religion became so predominant in the hearts of Brahmo youngmen that it brought remarkable changes in many lives. This feeling led us to discard the sacred thread, to discard caste restrictions and to hate and disapprove of all sorts of falsehood and misrepresentation.

This perception of the Voice of God in the conscience of man developed into Acharya Keshab Chandra's famous tenet of *Adesh* of later times.

Secondly, it has already been said that the main teaching of Maharshi Debendranath's life was to realise the existence of the Supreme Soul in the individual self, to know Him and love Him and thereby worship Him. Debendranath did not include the social life of man in his *Sadhan* for his spiritual progress. But Acharya Keshab Chandra unified man's social life as much as his religious worship with the progress of his spirituality. Immediately an intensive agitation followed. Every Brahmo youngman was attracted towards social uplift, *viz.*, to override caste distinction, to educate the womenfolk and to alleviate their condition, to do away with child-marriages, to check polygamy and so on. That movement disturbed Bengali social life. These social movements and revolutions resulted in the birth of a new era in India.

Social revolution of this character is something new in this country. So to connect religion with society and to make social development a matter of religion was absolutely original in this country. The importance of this new message will be fully realised someday in future. Worldly life has been looked upon as the prison-house of the soul in this country. So it was extremely difficult to preach human life and society as the display of God's will and to lead man's thoughts to this channel. A considerable time must elapse before

we succeed. All manner of welfare of India depends on the acceptance of this message. So I reiterate that Keshab Chandra has done immense good to society by expressing this idea . . .

The main teaching of Christianity is to convert human society into the kingdom of God. The *Rishis* of ancient India taught to feel the pressure of the Divine in one's own soul. Necessarily the worshippers of this country mainly aimed at the concentration of mind. They were indifferent to the social life of man. So far as it can be gathered, Brahmananda Keshab Chandra felt the uplift of society as an element of growth of spiritual life. This is something new in India. Its benefit will be seen in course of time. Nowadays nobody pays any heed to his message out of antipathy but it is quite certain that the only way to make social life elevated, hallowed, hale and hearty is to establish the throne of the Almighty Father and Saviour in the family and in society. It has been achieved by Brahmananda Keshab Chandra.

Thirdly, by studying Western religion, he acquired another idea and tried to incorporate the conception of sin and remorse into the Brahmo faith. In the religions of our Eastern lands, worldliness is the main thing to be discarded ; in Christianity the most regrettable thing is sin. The devotees of the East are eager to do away with the fascination of the world, saints of the West on the other hand long to be led by God through the path of repentance and prayer. The sole aim of the saints of this country is to rise above the ties of this earth, whereas the object of the latter is to get rid of sin. Religious life begins here with the renunciation of the world, while the pious life in the West commences with repentance and change of heart. This is the fundamental difference between religious life and realisa-



tion in the East and West. After a perusal of Christian scriptures Brahmananda Keshab Chandra accepted repentance and change of heart as the commencement and the primary stage of righteous life and endeavoured to incorporate it into the Brahmo faith. The result was that among his Brahmo friends and followers of the new generation repentance and sincere prayer were wonderfully developed.

In 1867 this repentance and earnest prayer grew more and more as a result of mingling of Vaishnavic faith with Brahmoism. Outsiders could hardly sit in the place where divine service was conducted owing to weeping, crying and wailing of the Brahmo worshippers. Some Brahmos would roll on the floor as if in a fit during the singing and *kirtans*; some would fall down at the feet of Acharya Keshab Chandra and weep. This led to the protest movement against hero worship in 1868. But these were only an excessive expression of *Bhakti* and earnestness. That excess was stopped in no time. But that conception of sin, remorse and earnestness that had their expressions then were very enviable. The songs of repentance that were composed during that time will be noticeable in the 'Brahmasangit' (Hymnal) for all time to come.

Fourthly, Maharshi Debendranath explained Brahmo religion in a Hindu spirit and mainly adopted the views of the Upanishads and such other ancient books. But Brahmananda Keshab Chandra studied Christian scriptures...and realised Brahmo faith as a broad, spiritual universal and mighty religion and came forward to voice, it forth. His lectures delivered on "Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia," "Great Men," and his book named "Slokasangraha" expressed that great idea. To be plain this broadness and universal spirit in the Brahmo faith were the utmost ideas in his mind. They captured his mind and entered his aspirations and imbued his thoughts. This is what in later times

gave rise to the idea of unification of all religions in his *Navavidhan*. It is his principal work in the history of the Brahmo Samaj. Time has not yet come to realise the depth and greatness of this contribution of his.

Even today the religions of this world breathe ancient and communal animosities. The great work in which Brahmo religion is engaged cannot be seen yet but the day is approaching when it will be manifest. Then the name Keshub Chandra Sen will shine as a bright star.

Fifthly, he transformed the Brahmo Church into a religion of *Bhakti* (piety). Before his time, the faith of the Adi Samaj was to a large extent, a faith of *Jnana* (intellecion). To know the Eternal One, to meditate and to feel supreme joy in Him were the chief inspirations in the life of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore and he tried mainly to instil that conviction into the Bramho Samaj . . . From 1867, Keshub Chandra introduced *Kirtan* similar to that of the Vaishnavas and showed the way to muse over the lives of saints like Chaitanya and thereby brought in a new era.

As a result there was a flow of Vaishnava piety in the Brahmo Samaj. That flow has made the Brahmo religion, a Religion of *Bhakti*. By following the above path he fitly deserved the name of *Bhakta Keshab* in the history of religions of Bengal.

Frankly, speaking Rammohan adopted the word 'Brahma' and laid the growth of the religious life of the Brahmo Samaj open to a danger. The danger was that his religion might take the shape of Vedantism based on 'Knowledge.' For the word 'Brahma' connotes a neuter idea and absence of attributes and simply signifies infinity of existence. This doctrine of Brahma without any attributes is not in favour of the religion of *Bhakti*. He whom we worship is God, is Providence and His wisdom and power and activity are natural. His limitless existence as also His infinity, are of His

transcendent (*nirguna*) attributeless nature while His Provident control of the material world and of human life belongs to His immanent (*saguna*) nature rich in attributes. *Bhakti* to God may come from this manifestation of attributes. *Bhakti* has been inspired in this way in every age.

However it be, Brahmananda Keshab Chandra took recourse to the path of *Bhakti* from the bottom of his heart and proclaimed the glory of devotees and thereby founded the religious life of the Brahmo Samaj on the firm basis of *Bhakti*. By this he saved it from the danger of being converted into intellectual Vedantism. For this, he deserves endless gratitude from the Brahmo Samaj.

Sixthly, his second great work is to create a band of missionaries who have faith in the Will of God and by resigning themselves to Him can preach Brahmo faith and devote their mind and body for the welfare of the Brahmo Samaj.

In 1861, he gave himself solely to the spread of Brahmo faith and the service of the Brahmo Samaj by retiring from worldly avocations. His 'True Faith' tells us how he jumped into that way of life. That emotion was then burning in his heart like fire in such a way that within a short time it spread steadily among his friends and followers. Many of them did not care to know what they would have for their food the next day. They threw themselves headlong, as it were, into the preaching work of the Brahmo faith. Men were then struck by noticing the power of their self-sacrifice. They lived in extreme poverty with a cheerful heart and spent day after day fasting or on half rations and shoeless trudged along the streets of Calcutta.

People were surprised to observe all these. In course of time this indifference to the world and this religious spirit grew into a powerful spiritual force in the Brahmo Samaj and Brahmo faith spread far and

wide. It is a matter of great doubt if the Brahmo Samaj but for this band of faithful devotees could have become what we find it today. It goes without saying that behind this force, the influence of Brahmananda Keshab Chandra was greatly in evidence.

Seventhly, he tried to impress strongly on the minds of Brahmos the truth that the Brahmo Samaj is the work of God or a Dispensation of Providence.

Can there be any doubt that the Brahmo Samaj is a Dispensation of mercy of the All-good? It is He Who has revealed it for the foundation of a broad-based, spiritual and universal religion. It is He Who has formed us into a congregation. It is He Who is the Maker and Protector of this congregation. As He sends a child upon the earth and brings it up under the care of the mother and other relations, similarly He gives men a new birth and brings them up under the care of the congregation and bestows on that congregation the charge of broadcasting the new faith. In a word, Brahmo Samaj is that congregation. He who fails to perceive this, surely his eye of faith has not opened. He who thinks that we human beings are working out the Brahmo Samaj, is directly an atheist. This idea is also to be counted as a great contribution of Brahmananda Keshub Chandra. There cannot be any doubt that the more the idea spreads, the greater will be the spiritual force of the Brahmo Samaj.

Besides these seven main points Brahmananda also helped in many ways the formation of the religious life of the Brahmo Samaj, such as to harmonise the triple powers of intellect, devotion, and work—*jnan*, *bhakti*, and *karma*—in the realisation of Brahmo faith, to rouse in the minds of his followers respect and reverence for saints of all ages and all countries, to try to introduce Divine Service in each and every house, to make efforts to eradicate social evils like drunkenness and other immoral practices. Everbody feels that the

Brahmo Samaj should remain ever grateful to Brahmananda Keshab Chandra for inclusion of the above-mentioned programme.

Who is there to disavow that Brahmananda Keshab Chandra has added depth to the religious life of the Brahmo Samaj by incorporating the abovementioned ideas in it, and has established it on a permanent spiritual basis? Brahmo Samaj is not born only to protest against superstitions and to proclaim a spiritual faith but its salient contribution is to place the national life on a spiritual basis. It is no easy task to set up this new spirituality in this conservative country. Brahmo Samaj could not do this work if its spiritual life was not deep and profound.

It is beyond doubt that if the Brahmo Samaj can retain all the ideas initiated and expressed by Brahmananda Keshab Chandra its religious life will attain depth and profundity. He showed the way how to make it deep-seated. God vouchsafes unto us that we may cherish these great ideas and remain ever grateful to him. In the Brahmo Samaj Dispensation we in successive stages perceive the hand of Providence and the display of His work

Rammohan Roy roused sleeping India and spoke out, "Do you rise, my countrymen, and muse over the One Who exists alike in water, land and sky." His main work was to teach to think of the True One where there was worship of multifarious gods and goddesses.

After Raja Rammohan came Debendranath who said, "Worship the only Great One whom Rammohan advised you to muse over; worship Him as the Supreme Soul of your souls." Debendranath's principal message was the worship of God. His life's work was to introduce this *brahmopasana* or Divine worship.

In this way the worship of the Lord surcharged his life.

Afterwards came Keshab Chandra to declare "Follow

His will, for He Whom Maharshi Debendranath asked you to worship dwells in your conscience." The first and foremost teaching of Keshab Chandra is to obey the Will of God. He preached it by the example of his whole life. It is unnecessary to reiterate that what he felt as the Divine Will, he would firmly fix on it. It is needless also to say that we did not accept all his words and actions at all and every occasion as the manifestation of Divine guidance. But, that man is to go by Heaven's Will ; that a man must firmly establish himself on his conscience—this great precept we distinctly obtained as we sat at his feet. This was his chief work.

—(*Keshab As Seen By His Opponents*, p. 111.)

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## PT. SHIVANATH SHASTRI'S

### KESHAB AUNIVERSARY, ADDRESS

*Lahore, 19, November, 1897.*

God in His inscrutable providence so directs the effects of our volunrary actions, that out of their combinations His own ends are fulfilled. We often find that our actions produce such good results in the future, as never formed part of our intention. We act according to our limited wisdom, and with our weak and fallible will. But even such actions in the end happen to fulfil His glorious ends. We have seen this often in the history of the Brahmo Somaj.

Raja Ram Mohun Roy's watchword was 'Meditate on the One.' He with his mighty voice called the various peoples of India to assemble and to

worship the One-without-a second. Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore taught us to see Him and worship Him as the Soul of our souls, and the Light of our lives. He first initiated us into the life of divine communion. The noble Keshub Chunder Sen came after him and impressed the idea on the minds of the young Brahmos, that God who was hitherto worshipped as the life of the soul, should also be realised as the lord of conscience, and that His commands should be obeyed in our daily lives. *It was he who first distinctly articulated the special feature of Brahmoism as a religion of obedience to the Divine will. Before his time Brahmoism was a religion of the intellect. It was he who first taught that the culture of the heart was as much necessary to religion as that of the mind. He brought devotional fervour and enthusiasm into the Brahmo Somaj and transformed the religion of the intellect which Brahmoism before his time was, into a religion of the heart and the soul.* And it was Keshub Chunder Sen who first taught us to revere good, and pious men of all ages and countries. Many good men whose names the people of India had nearly forgot were again brought to light by him. From him we learnt the lesson of reverence; and *it is through his influence that reverence for godly men, without which religion cannot stand, has become a permanent and noble feature of Brahmoism.* Further he gave us the *idea of Brahoism as a Divine dispensation*, and taught us to look upon the history of our Church as the history not only of our own doings but also of God's dealings with us. It was he who taught us that religion was not a private concern between man and God, but that *it should effect man's whole life*, and enter into his dealings with his family and society. He first led Brahmoism out of the four walls of the place of worship and made its influence felt, as a purifying agency, in the homes and the social customs of the members. *Keshub*

*Chunder Sen is the originator of all these special features that characterise the Brahmo Somaj as a spiritually elevated society* For all these the Brahmo Somaj will remain ever grateful to him. It may be that the ideas upon which he laid most stress, and which engaged his greatest attention, were not exactly these; it may be that what he wanted to do himself was left undone. But, yet through his life God has brought immense good to the Brahmo Somaj. God is ever watchful and alive to the spiritual interest of our society. He has brought every one of us Himself. We often do not know what we are doing. We do not know what we can do. But He knows; and when He Himself is at the helm, let us not despair of progress. To-day—the anniversary of the day—on which Keshub Chunder Sen came to this world, let us not lack the faith to see God always near, and always working in our midst. Doubtless, when we remember all our failings and weaknesses, we are filled with diffidence. But we are in His hands; *it is a religious dispensation instinct with divine wisdom and intention* where we have been brought together. Let us learn to trust in Him and in His dealings. Let us cherish in our hearts the lessons.—*From the 'Theist,' Lahore : Reproduced in 'The world and The New Dispensation,' September 20, 1923.*

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## EXTRACTS FROM Pt. SHASTRI'S " HISTORY OF THE BRAHMO SOMAJ "

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### THE NEW DISPENSATION ' AS PROPHETIC '

" . . . . Some of the characteristic features of Mr. Sen's (Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen's) preaching during the period : The first thing noticeable was the conviction that he had received a new Revelation or a New Message from God, far transcending the limits of the old faith of the Brahmo Somaj. *The cardinal feature of this new message was its Unifying Mission amongst the conflicting creeds of the world.* But that unifying mission did not lie in discovering fundamental unity in their Universal Aspects only but also in finding an element of truth not only in their spiritual teachings, but also in their traditional developments and external manifestations. In his private conversation as well as public utterances, during this period, Mr. Sen loved to dwell upon the figure of a string in a garland, in illustrating the character of this Dispensation. In a garland of flowers or a necklace of pearls, for instance, there are individual flowers or pearls ; but hidden underneath, there is the string which binds all of them together and makes them a unified whole which is the garland. Similarly each Dispensation in the history of the world, has contributed some great spiritual idea or ideas ; whereas the Mission of the ' New Dispensation ' is to bind them all together into a united whole."

" But in making the above observations I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that the tendency of Mr. Sen's preachings during the period, was to make *his theism eminently positive*. It was not that dry, nerveless and impotent theism, whose predominant note is intellectual pride, and which lays greater stress on the avoidance

of superstition than upon spiritual communion with the Supreme Being."

"*No man has ever surpassed Keshub Chandra Sen in reverence for the great Masters. He literally bowed himself down to the very dust, as it were, before them. This reverence was the fountain in him of spiritual impulse and inspiration.*"

"Thirdly, both by his (Keshab's) preachings and his life, he insisted upon the truth that the highest duty of a servant of God is to surrender himself to the impulse he receives during moments of communion as a Divine guidance for the service of God and Man. *He led the way to complete self-surrender by his personal example.* That Natural theism can evoke such passionate self-sacrifice is indeed a phenomenon for the civilised world."

"Mr. Sen's (Keshab's) conception of the great and glorious mission of the Samaj to unify conflicting sects and creeds, *was certainly prophetic.*"

"He wanted to show that the New Dispensation could imbibe and include all of them (religions) thereby producing a wonderful unity of purpose and an all-comprehensive spiritual kinship, that vision possessed him like a passion during this period and drew him into an ever-increasing effort for its realizations. Indeed the earnestness and persistency with which he preached and practised it *resembled the fire and fervour of a prophet of old.* (The italics are ours.)

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DR. V. RAI'S ' BIBLE OF LIFE '

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KESHUB AS THE HIGHEST WATER-MARK OF  
BRAHMO RELIGION

Dr. V. Rai of Giridih, an old and highly respected member of the Shadharan Brahmo Somaj, very faithfully translated the Jeevan Veda (Autobiography) of Keshub, into English, under the title 'Bible of life.' The last lines of the Preface to this Translation are as follows :

"Keshub is, up to now, the highest Water-mark of the universal religion of the Brahmo Somaj, and it may be safely predicted, that his Jeevan Veda will occupy a permanent and honoured place in the religious literature of the world."

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THE GREATEST RELIGIOUS TEACHER OF  
MODERN INDIA

DR. V. RAI

' ALL RELIGIONS ARE TRUE '

Keshub Chunder Sen is a much misunderstood religious teacher, misunderstood not only by others but also by his immediate followers. In the *Sunday Mirror* of October 23rd, 1881, he contributed an article under the heading—"What is the Eclecticism of the New Dispensation?" and in it he explained his doctrine—*All religions are true.* I do not find it dealt with by his biographers, P. C. Mazoomdar and Gour

Govind Roy. Shiva Nath Shastri criticises it adversely in his 'History of the Brahmo Somaj;' but while he quotes two most important sentences from the article, he leaves out an equally important one which limits the whole proposition. I quote below the essential portions of the article and the sentences left out by Shastri in Italics.

Keshub wrote:—

“ Our position (the position of the New Dispensation) is not that truths are to be found in all religions, but that all the established religions of the world are true...That there are truths and, therefore, as a matter of course, untruths in all religions, is easily intelligible, but it is a position the establishment of which is of no practical interest to a devout soul...It (the New Dispensation) delights in God's things and beholds God in the littlest of things. Should it find any but God in the vast established religions of the world? No: It tells us, therefore, not that there are truths in every religion but that all religions are true. Christianity and Hinduism are true; they are both dispensations of God,—come to teach us something about God. Both are divine and God sent; and as such they deal with truths. *If there are untruths they are grafted on them by men, they cannot be God's, and we have nothing to do with them.* The question is: are the things related to God, preached by the august founders of these religions—founders who were inspired and who brought special message from heaven, false?.....All religions are dispensation of God sent to the world at special times for the salvation of humanity. That they have benefited the world, that they have given human communities a lift from the original position of degradation, that they brought men one step nearer to God, that they have been source of peace and consolation to millions, are facts borne out by history. That the founders of them were

*extraordinary* men, sincere, devout, humble, honest, single-minded men, men who fearlessly declared their mission and preached truths not hitherto known is another fact which none can or ought to gainsay. The New Dispensation admits these facts; it therefore accepts them all as coming within the scope of divine providence. If then we insist that these religions are dispensations, we must infer that they are true."

It is clearly seen that Keshub confines the meaning of the word 'Religion' to what is God-given, and excludes from it what is man-made. The following from Martineau will show that Keshub is not singular in attaching such a meaning to the word.

"In the history of mankind it is long before critical reflection breaks up the complex mass of impressions that gather round the nucleus of religious feeling, so as to throw off what is really foreign to it; and while this wild and rude growth lasts, the root which nourishes the tree feeds the parasite as well, and both rise and live and bloom together as apparently one organism and present the look of a single sample of religion. First the skilled observer, then perhaps the believer himself; detects in leaf or fruit the intruding species which clings to a support and steals a life that is not its own, and when it is untwined and cast away, calls it a superstition. False undoubtedly it is but as it never really belonged to the religion it did not make a false religion. The two uses of the word 'religion' as a class name for all human mythologies in their unanalysed state and as an abstract name of the essence when disengaged, need to be carefully discriminated. It is the latter sense alone which designate the object of the following 'Study' which enables me to trust 'religion' as one thing everywhere; which relieves me from the necessity of pursuing all the phenomena covered by the word in the other sense; and imposes on me the obligation of looking behind the facts of

human psychology to the Divine Realities which they express."

If Keshub's 'All religions are true' means nothing more than that the God-given portions of all religions are true, is not this a useless truism ? No, it has several beneficial uses. I shall name only a few. It helps us to follow intelligently the course of evolution in religion. As all truths harmonize with one another, it incites the believer to strive for this harmony by living the several truths in his life. It helps the believer to feel that he belongs to the great body of *Bhaktas* of all ages and countries, and of all religions. God is one, religion is one, and the body of *Bhaktas* is one.

*Eka eva paritrata, eka dharmastathaivacha :*

*Bhaktanam dalamekameha Brahmoireva prakirtate.*

I cannot hope that socialists (and some of them have the reputation of being learned) will cease to misrepresent Keshub and to declare that he accepted the mythologies of all established religions ; but I venture to hope that all sincere and thoughtful men, who had no first-hand knowledge of Keshub's article, will think twice before accepting such charges against *the greatest religious teacher of Modern India*. (The Italics are ours.)—Form "*The Indian Messenger*," July 29th, 1923 ; "*The World and the New Dispensation*," August 9th, 1923.

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## FROM "THE HEART OF ARYAVARTA"

THE RT. HON, THE EARL OF RONALDSHAY, P. C.,

G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

"He (Keshub) was, indeed, pre-eminently, a man who lived by faith, a man whose whole life was dominated by an intuitive knowledge that he had a mission to perform, and who exercised over his fellowmen the influence which an outstanding personality, inspired by a steadfast singleness of purpose and a contagious enthusiasm, can always command . . . His intellect was not of that type which loves to build up elaborate systems of philosophy based upon pure reason. His intellectual life was passed in a warm atmosphere of emotion rather than in the chill regions of undiluted logic. He must certainly be judged to have been lacking in powers of organisation : and there is some excuse for assuming at first sight that his actions were not infrequently dictated by caprice. Reflection upon the more marked characteristic of his temperament, however, and upon the extent to which his whole life was guided by prayer and the response received by him to his prayers suggests that what might at first be mistaken for impulses was in reality, in his case, inspiration."—p. 50.

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" . . . He, more than any man perhaps, showed by example that the gulf between Europe and Asia might be bridged without the sacrifice of anything that was fundamental in the race-genius or the race-culture of either. While he was capable of assimilating much that seemed to him to be good in the ideals and practice of the West, he remained always a true Indian. He was too great a soul to cherish that false pride of race which

blinds a man to the virtues of all peoples other than his own. He showed how East and West might be complementary rather than antagonistic to one another, and his life was an incitement to those who might not be willing to go so far as he did in casting aside the restraints and trammels of an ancient and venerable social tradition, at least to follow him in the spirit if not in the actual letter of his teaching.”—p. 53.

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## MAHARSHI DEVENDRA NATH TAGORE'S

Letter to Keshub Chunder Sen translated into English :—

Mussoorie,

July, 1882.

Brahmanand, beloved of my heart,

On the morning of *Ashar* 30th (July 1882) a letter fell into my hands bearing on the cover thy handwriting so familiar to me. I opened it at once, found in it a beautiful letter and it was from thee. As I read it thy gracious form grew more radiant, and though thou wert not physically near, I embraced thee with all my heart, and was transported in floods of joy.

NOWHERE DO I FIND SUCH RESPONSE TO MY WORDS AS FROM THEE. Hafiz used to lament saying :—“Alas, not a soul to speak to me from heart to heart.” Had that *pagal* (Inebriate of God) found thee, how thy response to every word of his would have made him exclaim in ecstasy.—“What frenzy of friendship is this !” It is long since I addressed thee as *Brahmanand* (rejoicing in God), and the response to the new name comes out afresh to-day. It seems not a word is ever wasted on thee.



WHAT A BLESSED MOMENT WAS IT WHICH UNITED US IN BONDS OF SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP, BONDS WHICH THE MANY VICISSITUDES OF LIFE COULD NOT TEAR ASUNDER. GOD HAS ENTRUSTED TO THEE SPECIALLY THE TASK OF KEEPING THE COMMUNITY OF THE FAITHFUL BOUND TOGETHER, AND THOU ART FULFILLING IT RIGHT JOYFULLY. Passionately 'fond of this service, there is nothing else in which thy heart findeth delight. By His grace thou lackest in nothing ; for going about as a *Faqir* (mendicant) thou art doing the work of millionaires. When I depart from this Land of Snows (Himalayas) into the Land of Immortals (Amritalaya), I will wait for reunion with thee. There all earthly relationships, like that between parents and children, are dissolved in spiritual love levelling all differences and inequalities.

Devotedly thine,

· DEVENDRA NATH SHRMA (TAGORE).

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN AND THE MAKING OF MODERN INDIA.

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( A STUDY AND AN INTERPRETATION )

*Bepin Chander Pal.*

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### INTRODUCTION,

Modern India is, on the face of it, pre-eminently a product of British rule and the contact of India's ancient and composite culture with modern European thought and civilisation which came to the people of India in the wake of their new political overlord. But neither English education nor British administration could possibly supply the spiritual and ethical note to the present Indian Renaissance. That was the special contribution of the movement of religious and social revolt and reconstruction associated with the Brahmo Samaj.

In fact, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, who initiated or inaugurated this religious and social movement, was also, in a special sense, responsible for the introduction of English education in India. Parliament had directed that a lac of rupees out of the surplus of the revenues of the East India Company shall be spent every year on the education of the people of India. The Government of India had at first decided to devote this grant to Oriental studies,—Sanskrit among the Hindus, and Arabic among the Mahomedans. Raja Ram Mohan Roy in a remarkable letter, addressed to Lord Ahmerst in 1823, entered a protest against this educational policy of the Government; and urged the necessity and duty of spending the Parliamentary grant to instruct the people of India in modern science and humanities through the medium of the English language. In the meantime the people of Bengal had already started the Hindu College in 1817, raising the necessary funds for this purpose from

among themselves. The principle and policy advocated by Raja Ram Mohan was adopted later in 1835 by the Government of Lord William Bentinck, which closed a some-what violent controversy carried on by two opposing sections of British officials in India, known in history as the Orientalists and the Anglicists. The Orientalists urged the continuance of the older educational policy in pursuance of which a Sanskrit College was established in Benares, and an Arabic Madrassah in Calcutta. They were afraid lest by wounding the religious susceptibilities of the two great communities of India, the new Government would provoke a violent antagonism to their rule. They were also afraid to do anything that might weaken the conflict between one caste and another among the Hindus themselves and the keener rivalry between the Hindu and the Mahomedan, as they believed that these constituted the greatest bulwark of the new political Power and provided for the safety of British rule. The Anglicists, on the other hand, took a broader view. They saw, as Sir Charles Trevelyan pointed out in a remarkable memorandum submitted to Parliament a few years after Lord Bentinck's acceptance of the policy of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, that the real safeguard of British rule in India would be provided by the creation of an influential class of educated men among the natives of the country who, brought up in the literature and science of Europe through the medium of the English language would inevitably be divorced from the ancient thoughts and traditions of their people, and be in living sympathy with the ideas and ideals of their foreign masters, on the one hand; and on the other, be tied to them by closer material bonds, because of their employment in high and lucrative offices under the new Administration. The far-sight of Lord Macaulay and the Anglicists was justified by results that soon commenced to be visualised in the mind and character of the new generation of English-educated Bengalees.

Many of the leading British politicians and administrators, who came to this country in the early years of the last century, were, most of them, more or less steeped in the spirit of the new social philosophy and idealism of the French Revolution. The policy of the Anglicists was really inspired as much by considerations of British interests as by their loyalty to this new social and political idealism. This is found really in the historic statement of Lord Macaulay, who declared that it would be the proudest day for Great Britain if the people of India, trained by them and brought up in the best traditions of British character and history, claimed those free social and political institutions which were the peculiar pride of the British people. This idealism was specially observed in those Englishmen who co-operated with the leaders of Bengalee society in founding the Hindu College. The teachers of this College were, some of them, pronounced and enthusiastic apostles of the new gospel of Equality, Liberty and Fraternity. D'Rozio was the most prominent among them. The Hindu pupils of D'Rozio were soon inoculated with the spirit of the French Revolution. They raised the standard of revolt more or less openly against the traditions of their ancestral religion and the current laws and customs of their society. They repudiated all beliefs in the Unseen and denied the sanctity of the Brahminical institution of caste. The vast majority of those who first came under the influence of the new teachings imparted by D'Rozio and others in the Hindu College became thus secularists, sceptics, freethinkers and social and religious rebels. A few, however, with an inborn religious and spiritual sense in them, instead of repudiating all religious faiths and obligations turned away from the faiths and institutions of their forefathers, and were converted into Christianity.

It was at this juncture that the Brahmo Samaj, that had fallen into decay after the death of Raja Ram Mohan

Roy, was revived by Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore and found for the new generation of English-educated Bengalees a faith which was at once both rational and national. English education did not and could never by itself initiate and lead that new Indian Renaissance which has shaped and moulded the whole course of the cultural evolution of India during the last hundred years.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy stands at the fountain-head of this Modern Revival in India. He was the last representative of the Hindu-Islamic culture that grew during the Mahomedan period of Indian history out of the contact of Hindu and Moslem cultures. In attempting a correct and rational estimate of the influence of Islam upon Hindu thought and civilisation, we would do well to bear one great fact in our mind, namely, that Islam did not come to India directly from Arabia, but passed through Persia, and the Aryan elements which Islam imbibed in and through its contact with Persian thought and civilisation, placed it on a line with the higher reaches and deeper strains of Indo-Aryan thought and life. Raja Ram Mohan was the inheritor really of this neo-Islamic culture, and the last representative of the highest thought and piety of the new and composite religion and philosophy that grew through the contact of Islam with Hinduism. He was not converted into Islam but was attracted very powerfully by two predominant notes of Islamic theology and social ideal. One was the uncompromising monotheism of Islam, the other was its note of socio religious democracy. His first religious pamphlet, written in Persian, the *Tafatul*, was a powerful plea for the unity of the Godhead, and an equally powerful condemnation of the prevailing worship of of numerous gods and goddesses of the Hindu Pantheon. The underlying philosophy of it was predominantly rationalistic in the modern sense of the word. If it was really not deistic. Scholars acquainted with the various

philosophical systems of Islam, have discovered in this first pamphlet of the Raja unmistakable evidences of the influence of the Motazolas over the mind of young Ram Mohan. It was really after he had finished his studies of Islam in Patna, that Ram Mohan went to Benares to study the higher branches of Sanskrit learning and theology. In the underlying rationalism, in the best and highest sense of the word and universalism of Sanskrit philosophy, particularly of the Vedanta School, he discovered the fundamental unity of both the way and the goal of the two great world-religions that had come face to face in India. This was really the key of that universal religion and philosophy of life which Raja Ram Mohan propounded, and for the realisation of which he established the Brahmo Samaj.

The Raja's Brahmo Samaj was, as is evident from his Trust Deed of the Samaj, really intended to be only a house of prayer where the followers of different religions might meet without disloyalty to their special communion, for the worship of the Author and Governor of the Universe in such terms and with such formulas as would not war against any other religion or wound the susceptibilities of any sect or denomination. In a pamphlet published with the caption, "Religious Instruction," Raja Ram Mohan clearly indicated the fundamental position of the Brahmo Samaj as he established it. This pamphlet is in the form of questions and answers. Asked if he was opposed to the other forms of worship, the Raja replied: "How can we? Because in every worship the object of worship is the Author and Governor of the Universe. We also worship him only who is the Author and Governor of the Universe." Asked again, if the votaries of other religions were opposed to his worship, the Raja replied: "They cannot reasonably be opposed to our worship, because we also worship Him Whom they worship, namely, the Supreme Being, who is the Author and Governor of the Universe." Asked again, what then

was the difference between himself and the votaries of other religions, the Raja replied ; "The difference was this, namely, that while the followers of other religions worshipped the Deity under special names through special forms and formularies, attached special sanctity to particular places, we worship Him without these special connotations or associations. We worship Him only as the Author and Governor of the Universe. The followers of one religion, who worship the Deity in one name, or whose special forms and formulas are opposed to those of the followers of other religions, who worship the Deity in other names and through other forms and formulas. But as we do not use any particular name for the Deity except that he is the Author and Governor of the Universe, and therefore, the common object of worship of all worshippers, and use no other form or formula that might come in conflict with the forms and formulas of worship of different denominations, no one can reasonably object to join our worship." This was the fundamental position which the Raja took up in the Trust Deed of his Brahmo Samaj.

Raja Ram Mohan was not, however, blind to the necessity of the particularisms of religious formulas and sacraments for the cultivation of personal religion. The formula of worship which he tried to initiate in the Brahmo Samaj reduced religion really to what may be called its "*Lowest Common Measure*." It was the universalism of subtraction or abstraction. It wanted to eliminate everything wherein one religion differed from or came in outer conflict with another religion. True it is that every worshipper worships his Deity always not as a particular object among many particular objects, but as the Universal, or as the Author and Governor of the Universe. But in his devotional exercises and personal realisations, the object of his worship stands intimately related to his personal life and also to the traditions and inheritances, both outer and inner, of

that life. The individual worshipper cannot in his personal devotions and realisations abstract himself from or completely rid himself of the actualities of his inner and outer life. The particular names by which the Deity is worshipped by different peoples are organically bound up with their thoughts and emotions. Names of the Deity that have come down to us from our forbears and around which a thousand sacred and tender associations have gathered in the course of unremembered ages, associated with the endeavours and realisations of unremembered generations of our ancestors, have necessarily and naturally far greater potencies for us than names of the Deity of other cults and cultures. We cannot say here, "What's in a name? The rose would smell as sweet etc." When the rose is directly present, to your senses or consciousness, names would not matter at all. Similarly, to those who have risen to the direct realisation of the Absolute, all names and forms and formulas and liturgies of Divine worship are practically the same. In all these, they find a quickening of their own devotion through association of ideas. But to the multitude, who have not attained this direct realisation of the Lord, particular names and forms have special values owing to their holy association with the past of their personal life, and the traditions of their forbears and the particular denomination in which they have been brought up. The name of the Jehova, for instance, naturally has a special appeal to the Hebrew devotees, which it has not and can never have to the Hindu. The name of Christ stirs up profound wells of piety and religious emotion in a Christian, but it leaves the Buddhist or the Brahmin absolutely cold. There cannot be a universal form or formula of worship as help to real and living personal devotions and realisations. This, however, does not mean that intense personal devotion and loyalties may not be combined with an abiding consciousness of the



fundamental unity of all religions and a universal outlook. In fact, the Universal abstracted from particulars becomes what is called an Abstract Universal. But the Reality is to be found not in the Abstract Universal, but in what the philosophers call the Concrete Universal. Raja Ram Mohan's was not the message really of the Abstract Universal in religion, but of the Concrete Universal. The emphasis on the Abstract Universal in his Trust Deed of the Brahmo Samaj was due to the conflicts of different sects and denominations about him, which had been trying to usurp the position and character of the Universal for their respective particularities. The followers of the Vaishnavas cult in Bengal, for instance, would not understand, much less realise it, that the followers of the rival Shakti cult also pursued the same Ultimate Goal and worshipped Him only Who is the Common Lord of all. The followers of the Shakti cult similarly denied all virtue and efficacy to Vaishnavic worship. Then there was the larger conflict between Hinduism and Islam. And the conflicts and rivalries of these sectarian religions called for a message of the underlying unity of all religions and denominations of Divine worshippers. This was the real psychology of the Abstract Universalism upon which Raja Ram Mohan sought to build his Brahmo Samaj not as another sect among the numerous existing sects of the world, but only as a common meeting ground for all for the cultivation of mutual understanding and appreciation and the realisation of the great truth that by different names and through diverse rituals and liturgies they all tried to worship and realise the Common Lord and Father of all.

The Brahmo Samaj, as founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, was thus not a new religion. It did not propound a new system of worship or spiritual culture, but simply sought to offer a common meeting ground for followers of different religions only. The Brahmo Samaj of

Raja Ram Mohan Roy did not abrogate personal devotions and disciplines of the members of the different religious denominations who were invited to meet under its banner, and worship the Common Father through forms and formulas that might be acceptable to all and that would not offend in any way the sectarian loyalties or susceptibilities of the votaries of different religions. The Raja himself had his personal religion or methods of worship and disciplines. In this he was unmistakably a Vedantic Hindu of the Tantric school, though in his personal devotional exercises he drew almost as largely upon Hindu scriptures as upon the devotional poetry of Islam. This combination of Vedantic texts with Moslim devotional poetry in the worship and religious exercises of the Raja was, however, something exclusively personal to him. It was natural and real to one whose mind and spirit had been nourished on the Hindu scriptures on the one side, and on the devotional literature of Islam on the other. This combination would not be real in the case of Hindus who had little acquaintance with and less appreciation of Islamic cult and culture ; nor for the Mahommedans, who were not only ignorant of Hindu thought and theology, but believed that there was not and could never be any truth and goodness outside the Koran. Raja Ram Mohan in his study of the two great world religions, Hinduism and Islam, had discovered a fundamental unity in them. Later on, when he acquainted himself with the literature of Christianity, he found the same underlying unity here also. This unity was not, however, really something merely static, which was found by substracting from different religions everything that was not common to all the religions. It was something dynamic also, revealed through the history and evolution of different religions and the progressive realisation of God by their respective saints and seers. But the multitude could not be expected to realise this

dynamic aspect of different religions, that required wide study and critical analysis. For the multitude the way to the realisation of this fundamental unity of all religions was through their own scriptures, traditions, sacraments and symbols. Raja Ram Mohan, therefore, did not repudiate all scriptural authority. But accepted the different scriptures of the world as records of the spiritual experiences of the people, whose religious life has been built upon and nurtured by them. The Raja did not concede or attribute any supernatural authority to them, but only recognised these as helps to the pursuit of religion and piety to their followers, though in the Brahmo Samaj, which he established as a common House of Prayer for people of all religions, only that was which common to them was emphasised and in the liturgy of worship here the particularities of names and forms of these religions were religiously avoided. Raja Ram Mohan never believed that this common liturgy would be an adequate substitute for the particular sacraments and liturgies of the different religions. These sacraments and liturgies were mixed up with half-truths and superstitions and it was the duty of the followers of different religions to separate and eschew these from their current religious exercises. But they could not possibly cut themselves off altogether from their own special scriptures and traditions. Raja Ram Mohan, therefore, prescribed the worship of Brahman of the Universal Creator and Governor of the Universe with the help of suitable scriptural texts, that emphasised the universal character of the Deity. For the Hindu, therefore, Vedantic text must find the most suitable instruments and formulas for the the contemplation of the Deity. Similarly, for the Mahomedan suitable texts from the Koran and the religious literature of Islam must supply the instruments of their spritual culture. Christian devotees must, similarly, use their own scriptures and higher religious

literature recording the experiences of Christian seers and saints for the cultivation of piety and the realisation of the Deity. In the Brahmo Samaj, however, they would all meet upon a common platform and worship the Common Father with some liturgies that might be acceptable to all. This, however, will not abrogate their personal allegiance to their respective scriptures and traditions, and in their personal devotions they would profitably use their own scriptures and religious literature. Only in the selection of scriptural texts and other religious records, care would have to be taken that they brought out the universal and spiritual elements of their religion. We have no records of the Raja's activities in this direction in the field of Islam. But he brought together and published, with vernacular and English translations, the Upnishads and the Vedanta as records of higher spiritual and universal Hinduism. Similarly, he published "The Precepts of Jesus; A Guide to Peace and Happiness" wherein he brought together, the most suitable text that represented the higher, the spiritual and the universal elements of Christianity. This was the Raja's method, and these are convincing evidences against any assumption that his universalism was the universalism of subtraction. In his personal devotions, the Raja freely used both Hindu and Moslem scriptures and religious records. His daily worship was performed during his bath. Over which he spent, it is said, more than a couple of hours every day : and all this time while he was having his bath, he recited with intense emotion these various texts, emphasising the universal presence of Brahman and the universal providence of the Lord. The worship in the Brahmo Samaj owing to the fact that the worshippers were exclusively Hindus, was performed through recitation of Vedic texts, though in the sermons preached from the new pulpit the unity of all religions was specially sought to be emphasised.

Though Raja Ram Mohan established the Brahmo Samaj as a House of Prayer for the followers of all religions, practically those who attended the earlier services of the Samaj were exclusively Hindus. Naturally, therefore, texts from the Hindu scriptures, the Vedas and the Upanishads, were alone used in the liturgy of the worship of Brahman here. In fact, those who attended these services believed not only in the authority of the Vedas, but also accepted the mediæval exclusiveness of Vedic worship, and observed the popular restrictions against the reading of the Vedas by non-Brahmins. The Vedas or more correctly selected text from the Upanishads were recited by Brahmin ministers from behind a screen in the earlier days of the new congregation. Raja Ram Mohan himself certainly did not accept either the supernatural sanctity of the Vedas nor justified the exclusion of Sudras and women from the right of studying these scriptures. But those with whom he had to work believed in all these. Consequently, the earliest Minister of the Brahmo Samaj was a Brahmin and he used to recite the holy texts during the weekly service of the Samaj. When Raja went to England, it was this Brahmin who kept up the service in the Samaj, and gradually the religion of the Brahmo Samaj came to be designated as "VEDANTA-PRATIPADYA BRAHMO DHARMA", or religion of Brahman as established by the Vedanta. Raja Ram Mohan died in England in 1833, or a little over three years after the formal establishment of the Brahmo Samaj in the new Mandir which was consecrated in January, 1830. He could not, therefore, develop and organise the new institution after his own mind and ideal. Ram Chandra Vidyavageesh, who had been appointed Minister of the Samaj by Ram Mohan before he sailed for England, continued to carry on the work of the Samaj after the Raja's death, when practically all the friends of the Raja, one by one, fell off from his movement.

Ram Chandra Vidyavageesh, though unflinchingly loyal to the Raja was, however, an orthodox Pandit of the Tantric school, and believed in the authority of the Vedas and the Vedanta like any orthodox Brahmin. It was really, under his ministration that the Brahmo Samaj proclaimed itself as a votary of the religion of Brahman as propounded by the Upanishads or the Vedanta. In the liturgy of divine worship in the Samaj, Vedic or Vedantic texts were exclusively used and in the preachings and discourses delivered from the pulpit of the Samaj the doctrines and disciplines of higher Hinduism were alone propounded. In this way the Brahmo Samaj, which had been founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy to be a congregation of the followers of all religions, became a Hindu institution, though emphasising always only the universal elements and aspects of Hinduism.

## II.

The Time-Spirit was, however, silently working for the Raja's ideal, and weakening the bonds of all narrow sectarian loyalties. Raja Ram Mohan built up in his own life and thought a system of universal religion wherein the scriptures of different world religions found a place, not as supernatural authorities but as records of the progressive God-realisation and spiritual evolution of different races of societies of men. The phenomenon of the religious and the spiritual life did not stand as something apart from the other departments of man's activities. They were as much natural phenomenon as any physical or social phenomenon. They had their origin in the very nature and constitution of men; and evolved under the influences of environments, as any other class of phenomenon. The variations in different religions are due almost entirely to the influence of different environments, both natural and social as also to the various stages of evolution in which different communities stand. This was practically the Raja's fundamental

philosophy of religion and social life. In this philosophy the scriptures of the different religions had a place as records of religious and spiritual experiences. They could not be dismissed as worthless or as a thing for which contemporary religious thinkers and devotees had absolutely no use. The Brahmo Samaj after the Raja's death, however, took up the traditional attitude of Hinduism towards scriptural authority. It was not a critical attitude ; it was not even the attitude of ancient Hindu exegetics and a pologetics in regard to this matter. The exegetical literature of the Hindus had established strictly rational canons of scriptural authority. They are found in the two Mimamsas of Hindu philosophy, the Purva Mimamsa of Jaimini, and the Uttara Mimamsa of Vyasa. Raja Ram Mohan was fully acquainted with these canons. The first of these canons defines scripture as that which deals with the Unseen. Anything found in the sacred books that deals with objects cognisable by the senses or the truth or otherwise of which can be determined by the law of formal logic that works upon direct sense-experience through the laws of deduction and induction, has, therefore, no scriptural authority simply because it happens to be found in the scriptures. The next canon is that, that alone is scripture which relates to *moksha* or salvation. The first canon is *Adrishtatmakam Shastram*. The second is *Mokshapratipadakam Shashtram*. *Moksha* or salvation comes only through the direct cognition of Brahman or the Absolute by the soul of man. The authority of scripture here is really the direct cognition of truth by the seer. It is something verified and verifiable by the personal experience of the individual seeker after truth. This briefly, is the position in regard to the place and value of scriptural authority in the Mimamsas. This was clearly the position of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in regard to this subject. In the Upanishads occur a remarkable statement. The particular Upanishad wherein it occurs is itself a part of the Vedas ;

yet this Upanishadic text openly repudiates the authority of all the Vedas with the different parts and sections of them. Knowledge, it declared, that is worth pursuing is of two classes; one inferior and the other superior, one a *para* and the other *para*. The Rigveda, the Samaveda, the Yajurveda, the Atharvaveda with the six Vedangas or sections of them are all *apara-vidya* or inferior knowledge. That by which the Everlasting and the Immutable Being is realised, is alone superior knowledge or *para vidya*. This remarkable text of the Upanishad established a generalisation under which all the scriptures of the world can be brought. Whatever is found in the Vedas has no claim to scriptural authority but only that which relates to Brahma or the Absolute as directly realised or cognised by the soul of man; similarly, whatever relates to the Absolute or Brahman, though it may be in different languages or by different terms in the other scriptures must have the same authority as the Vedas. Here we have a canon by which universal scriptural authority can be established and tested. This canon places the Vedas the Bible and the Koran and indeed, the religious records of the latest sects or denominations, upon a common basis, and thereby lays the foundations of what may be called a Concrete Universal Religion. The Brahmo Samaj had not as yet reached this truth. Under the ministration of Ram Chandra Vidyavagesh, the Brahma Samaj really became a denomination of the Hindus only which sought to pursue the higher ideals and disciplines of Hinduism as found particularly in the Upanishads, the Vedanta-Sutra and the Bhagavat-Geeta, which are universally accepted by the Hindus as scriptures of salvation or *Moksha*.

### III

Other forces, however, had commenced to operate upon the mind of the educated intelligentsia in Bengal,



that profoundly disturbed people's faith in the religion of their fathers and seriously weakened, if they did not openly destroy, their loyalty to the social and sacerdotal laws and traditions that controlled the various relations of their life. English education imparted by the Hindu College, established in 1817, led to a movement of aggressive social and religious revolt among the newly educated young men. The silent message and inspiration of a new thought and civilisation, that came to us with our British rulers, acted as a powerful solvent upon our traditional faiths and practices. All progress is inspired by doubt in an existing religious and social order, that universally provokes a new criticism of thought and life. This criticism ultimately leads to some sort of a synthesis. When Raja Ram Mohan started upon his mission, there was practically little or no doubt in the mind of his people in regard to current faiths and practices of their religious and social life. Ram Mohan had, therefore, first to create this necessary doubt. He did this by bringing side by side the ancient teachings of their holy scriptures and the current practices of their religion. There was no sanction for the worship of numerous gods and goddesses of the popular Hindu pantheon through images or symbols, in the Vedas, or the Upanishads, that were universally accepted as the highest scriptural authority. People, however, believed in their ignorance of the teachings of the Vedas the worship of these gods goddesses to be enjoined by the Vedas. Ram Mohan wanted to remove this ignorance upon which the popular Hinduism of his time was really based. The Raja's propaganda was, however, confined practically to a handful of inquirers, and Pandits. It hardly touched the educated intelligentsia, much less the teeming masses of his countrymen. But the new education imparted by the Hindu College produced a body of educated young men who started an open and aggressive propaganda against the current

faiths and socio-religious institutions of their people. The teachers in the Hindu College were all more or less steeped in the spirit of the rationalism of the French Illumination. The most powerful influence in the Hindu College was that of young D'Rozio. D'Rozio was both a poet and scholar. The inspiration of his life and teachings came from the philosophers of the French Revolution. He was the first apostle in this country of the gospel of Equality, Liberty and Fraternity. His pupils catching the inspiration of this new gospel from him raised the standard of revolt against the current faiths and socio religious laws and institutions of their people. They repudiated all scriptural authority, indeed, all validity of the teachings of religion concerning God or the Unseen Author and Governor of the Universe. They commenced to break through the age-long shackles of caste and sacerdotal customs of their people. They commenced to openly take forbidden foods and in other ways to practically proclaim their freedom from every form of unreason. Few of them, very few indeed, joined the religious and social movement started by the Raja in the Brahmo Samaj. Without joining the Brahmo Samaj, these English educated young men, however, indirectly helped to liberalise the thought and life of their countrymen, and to very materially loosen the bonds of mediæval religion and social laws that had bound them.

The problem before the Raja was how to create rational doubt. The new problem created by the teachings of D'Rozio and others in the Hindu College was of another kind. Doubt had commenced to literally overwhelm not only people's faith in mediæval Hindu but in all religions. The very foundations of faith were attacked. The existence of God was openly denied. The testimony of the senses was proclaimed as the only valid test of truth, and as the senses did not directly testify to the truth of the Unseen, the things that are

vital to man's spiritual and moral life were practically dismissed as creations of timid and selfish fancy. The problem before the Raja was how to rationalise, spiritualise and modernise the religious thought and life of his people. The problem before his successors in the Brahmo Samaj was how to find a rational basis for man's cognition and pursuit of the Unseen, as the highest end of his life. This was the problem that faced Devendra Nath Tagore when the leadership of the Raja's movement fell on him.

Davendra Nath on coming to age found himself in the very mid-current of the forces which English education had let loose upon the youthful intelligentsia of Calcutta. The teachings of the Hindu College, particularly the fascinating personality of D'Rozio, had provoked an open social and religious revolt among its alumine. The majority lost all faith in all religions, were proud to designate themselves as atheists, free-thinkers and secularists. A few endowed by nature with a strong sense of the Unseen and the Spiritual, however, finding it impossible to rest satisfied with the negations of prevailing rationalism on the one hand, and to reconcile current faiths and practices of their people with their reason and their conscience on the other, sought refuge in Christianity. Hindu orthodoxy, while it was shocked to its very core by the social revolt of the students of the Hindu College, who paraded the streets of the Hindu quarters with beef in one hand and English brandy on the other, never felt seriously perturbed by free-thought or rational doubt or even open protest against popular beliefs and worships. There was a good deal of rational doubt among Hindu scholars, and particularly among the *Dandis* and *Sannyasins*. There is practical denial of all supernaturalism in the Purva-Mimamsa of Jaimini, which did not accept the existence of the numerous gods and goddesses of the Vedic pantheon as realities. Jaimini, however, accepted the authority of the Vedas ;

and proclaimed the efficacy of the Vedic rituals or sacrifices. The Vedic texts used in the performance of these sacrifices had a magic potency. The repetition of these texts and the due performance of the rites associated with them produced certain definite results both here and hereafter. The truth and validity of these sacrifices could not be tested by any canon of logic ; they could only be testified by results. No *apriori* rejection of them was, therefore, possible on any rational ground. More than half of even the current superstitions of the Hindus were really founded upon this supernaturalism of the school of Jaimini. In fact, it could hardly be called supernatural either ; any more than the methods of the whole medical science could be called such, so far as the validity of it rests upon and can only be testified by results. There is, however, a world of difference between magic and medicine, particularly between the claims of the Jaimini school of ritualists and those of the medical science. Both no doubt are verified by results ; but the results in the one case follow the action within measureable limits and can be tested by the senses ; while in the other case the result promised may follow beyond the span of man's life, and is, therefore, not verifiable by ordinary human experience. Ancient Hindu free-thought, however, drew the line at the acceptance of the authority of the Vedas as supernatural. But even this was repudiated by the Lokayata school associated with the name of Charvaka. But Charvaka was frankly recognised as a Rishi or seer and yet he openly repudiated not only the authority of the Vedas but even all evidence of the Unseen. He did not believe in the existence of anything that was not established by the testimony of the senses, or which could not be inferred from sense-testimony. But in the history of the evolution of Hindu thought and life the school of Jaimini ultimately prevailed side by side, of course, with the school of Vyasa or the Uttar-Mimamsa.

While higher Hinduism followed the latter, popular Hinduism with its exuberance of rites and ceremonies really to a very large extent was affiliated to Vedic ritualism, though the old rituals were not largely followed. As long as people followed the rules and restrictions of popular scriptures and traditions, so long society did not care as to the personal opinions or faiths of the individuals. Indeed, what the populace followed achieved in mediæval Hinduism even a greater sanctity and authority than the highest self-realizations of the saint and seers. And it was enjoined even upon the latter that they shall not override even in their mind what the multitudes followed as sacred. "*Yadi yogi trikalajna, samudra-langhanakshama, tathapi laukikachara manasapi no langhayat.*" Even if the yogi acquire such high psychic or spiritual powers as to be able to cross the ocean, even then he shall not override in thought or wish the sanctified customs and traditions of the people. It was, therefore, that we found all through our Middle Ages great thinkers and adepts while they did not accept the truth or validity of popular rituals or symbolism never openly repudiated them. The Vedantins did not believe in god and goddesses, or in image worship, or in the sanctity of caste ; yet they never raised their protest against them, much less practically repudiated them. Contact with Islam had undermined the faiths of the educated classes. But Islam failed to work up any manner of social revolution in India. English education, however, and modern European culture which it promulgated initiated a new socio-religious revolution. Christian ethics and fidelity to one's own conscience and conviction which it insisted upon, worked what Islam that brought more or less the same message of the unity of the God-head and the equality of man, had failed to do. Devendra Nath upon coming to the leadership of the Brahmo Samaj found himself face to face with the great challenge that English education had offered to our current religious faiths.

The problem before Raja Ram Mohan was how to create rational doubt in the truths and validity of current beliefs and ceremonials. The problem before Devendra Nath was not how to create rational doubt, it had already been created among the new generation of educated intellectuals more deeply and effectively than he could hope to do by anything himself by the new education imparted in the Hindu College and the contact with modern European thought which this education brought about...but how to reconcile the reason of man with the fundamentals of religious faith. Foundations of faith had been claimed to be the authority of supernatural scriptures. The natural reason of man worked only upon his sense-perceptions, and, therefore, it had no room for belief in the Unseen ; yet religion concerned itself primarily with matters that lay absolutely beyond the cognisance of man's senses and intellect. Devendra Nath proclaimed the presence in the human mind and consciousness of certain original institutions that were not deduced from his sense-contacts and sense-experience, and that revealed directly all fundamental truths about God and religious life. These institutions were called by Devendra Nath as *atma pratyaya*, literally meaning self-generated and self-sustained convictions. Even our senses worked upon these original institutions of the mind to produce knowledge of all sense-objects. Belief in God and the human soul was one of these fundamental institution of the mind. It was not derived from our sense-contacts, nor could be verified by the testimony of the senses, or inductions based upon these sense contacts. This, briefly, was the message of Devendra Nath to his age and his contemporaries possessed by the prevailing rationalism and doubt which resulted from the new education imparted by the Hindu College.

Raja Ram Mohan had recognised the validity of scriptural authority in the determination of religious

truths not as supernatural or absolute authority but only corroborative of the original intuitions of the human mind by the testimony of the accumulated experience of man gained in the course of his pursuit of the Unseen. Devendra Nath repudiated like the majority of his English-educated contemporaries the authority of all scriptures. The Brahmo Samaj after the death of Raja Ram Mohan Roy in England came to be maintained and its affairs managed by Ram Chandra Vidyabageesh who had been appointed its Minister by Ram Mohan himself. Ram Chandra was a Vedantin. He believed not only in the truth of Vedantic worship but also in the authority of the Vedanta as supreme and absolute, in the determination of religious truth and in directing man to his salvation. Under his ministrations the new religion of the Brahmo Samaj came to be designated as *Vedanta-pratipadya Brahmo dharma*, or the religion of Brahman as established by the Vedanta, or Upanishads. Practically, however, this *Brahmo dharma* accepted the authority of the Vedas as the highest evidence of its truth. When Devendra Nath came to the Brahmo Samaj, this was its fundamental creed.

Devendra Nath's father Dwarka Nath Tagore, popularly known as Prince Dwarka Nath in England and on the continent of Europe which he had visited more than once, had been an intimate friend of Raja Ram Mohan though he did not follow the Raja in his religious practices. Ram Mohan, after he came in contact with the higher strains of Islamic thought at Patna where he was sent by his father to qualify himself in Persian and Arabic with a view to entering the service of the State, had openly repudiated all participation in the current religious practices of his people, as these were inconsistent with his monotheistic convictions, and had thus practically put himself out of the Hindu communion. Dwarka Nath, however, remained in the old community, and Devendra was

brought up amidst the religious and social environments of his people. But he lost faith in the popular beliefs, and was for a time in a state of great spiritual conflict and confusion that destroyed the peace of his soul. Though he had known the Raja before he left for England he was too young to understand the message and mission of the later's life. He did not come in contact with the Brahmo Samaj, neither during the Raja's life-time nor for some years after the Raja passed away and the Brahmo Samaj dragged on a moribund existence through the staunch loyalty of Ram Chandra Vidyabageesh who clung to it more out of regard and affections for the Raja than really from any living conviction of the value and truth of the Raja's message and mission. When Devendra Nath was passing through these soul-tearing spiritual struggles, the Brahmo Samaj was dragging its feeble existence under Ram Chandra Vidyabageesh. Dwarka Nath had been appointed a trustee of the building and other properties of the Samaj along with Ram Chandra Vidyabageesh. On the death of his father, Devendra Nath automatically became a trustee of the Samaj, but he had no living touch with it as yet. It was by a happy accident or what the faithful would call the special intervention of Providence that Devendra Nath was drawn to the Brahmo Samaj. A stray leaf of the Upanishads printed and published by the Raja was literally blown into the hands of Devendra Nath, when he was passing through a great intellectual and spiritual crisis. He had lost all faith in the current religious practices of his people; and though he could not, like the general body of his English-educated countrymen, entirely shake off his inborn faith in the Unseen, he had as yet not been able to secure any strong hold for his inborn spiritual intuitions or convictions. It was just about this time when Devendra Nath's soul was torn by doubt and tormented by lack of any religious or devotional exercises that this stray leaf from the



Upanishads fell into his hand. It contained the first verses of the Isopanishad. The very first words of it at once burnt themselves into the troubled consciousness of Devendra Nath. He could not worship his God according to the popular rituals of his people. Yet his soul hungered and thirsted after direct communion with his Maker. These words of the Ishopanishad opened to him a new method of approaching and realising his God. They declared that whatever is found moving in this moving world must be covered with Iswara or the Lord. Here then was a rational mode of divine meditation. The Lord or Iswara was the Unseen Director and Governor of the universe. And it is by his Power and Presence that this universe exists and moves. It is easy, therefore, to the man who has faith in the abiding presence of the Lord in His creation, to cultivate his imagination and try to realise Him in everything, in whatever objects that fall within the purview of his senses. Here was a mode of divine worship that had no supernaturalism in it; and that enabled a man to realise his God in and through all his outer surroundings as much as through his inner consciousness. Devendra Nath was at once fascinated by this torn page of the Ishopanishad, and he wanted to have the full text of the book. It had been published by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and found with Ram Chandra Vidyavageesh in the Brahmo Samaj. This was how Devendra Nath discovered the Brahmo Samaj and having discovered it threw himself and soul into the activities of it. He did not question the truth and validity of the contention of the Brahmo Samaj of those days regarding its scriptural authority. Devendra Nath had become a confirmed monotheist. He did not believe in the gods and goddesses of popular Hindu worship. He accepted the authority of the Vedanta in the belief that they promulgated only the worship of Brahman. Gradually, however, he was troubled with the doubt

whether the Vedas enjoined the worship of Brahman alone ; or whether they also sanctioned the worship of numerous gods and goddesses, mentioned in the popular Hindu liturgy. With a view to settle this doubt Devendra Nath deputed four Brahmins to Benares to read the Vedas from the Vedic teachers there, and find out whether the Vedas enjoined the worship of Brahman only or they also promulgated the doctrine of the existence of many gods and goddesses and enjoined their worship. These Brahmins came back with the information that the Vedas not only spoke of the Brahman but also of many gods and goddesses and inculcated their worship. The result of it was that the Brahmo Samaj under Devendra Nath's leadership at once set itself free from the old dogma of Vedic authority. The foundations of Brahmic faith were no longer declared to be the Vedas, but the natural reason and the original intuition of the human mind. *Atma-pratyaya* or these intuitions that are the universal elements of the human reason were proclaimed to be the foundations of Brahmic faith. Modern rationalism or more accurately the criticism and speculation regarding the foundation of human belief by 19th-century thought in Europe had also found a new authority for religious belief in these intuitions of the human mind. The Brahmo Samaj under Devendra Nath's leadership thus came into line with the most advanced religious and Theological speculations of the 19th-century European thought and culture. Devendra Nath, however, did not borrow the fundamentals of his religion from this European thought. He found them himself by his own reasoning and experience. European rationalism had also discarded the authority of the Bible as a supernatural revelation and had found a new basis for human faith in the natural reason of man. In this way Devendra Nath also founded a philosophy of religion which simultaneously offered a solution for that

rational doubt which was born of the new education imparted by the Hindu College, and repudiated the claims of Christianity as a purer and more rational saystem than popular Hinduism. Devendra Nath, however, not only tried to rationalise religious faith for his contemporaries but he did something more. He offered in his preachings a form of rational faith which was filiated to his national scriptures. He repudiated the authority of the Vedas as supernatural revelation, but he could not deny that certain portions of the Vedas, particularly some of the Upanishads, presented the purest form of faith and worship that could be founded in any religion. He devoted himself henceforward to a diligent study of these Upanishads, and they so faithfully responded to his own inner experiences and faith that Devendra Nath gradually was completely possessed by these Upanishads. When, therefore, he sat down to formulate the fundamental teachings of the Brahmo Samaj, they were clothed without any conscious effort on his part in the very language of these Upanishads. He called these BRAHMO DHARMA. This *Brahmo Dharma* was not a reprint of the Upanishads; Raja Ram Mohan had done it, and by so doing he had tried to prove how the current faiths and worships of popular Hinduism were not sanctioned by the highest scriptural authority of the people. Devendra Nath's object was different. Ram Mohan had, it may be reasonably inferred, a dual motive, in printing with translations the whole text of some of the Upanishads. One was to prove that the worship of images and of numerous gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon was contrary to the teachings of the highest Hindu scriptures; and the other was to indicate the positive truth regarding the Ultimate Reality, which is Brahman, and the correct and true method of His worship. The emphasis, however, was more on negative than on the positive aspect of these Upanishadic

texts. Devendra Nath did not publish an anthology of the Upanishads by selecting suitable texts from them in support of the new theology of the Brahmo Samaj. Though his *Brahmo Dharma* to all appearances was a collection of texts taken from various parts of the Vedas, and the Vedantas, yet it was not really an anthology like, for instance, the "Sacred Anthology" of Moncure D. Conway, which was at one time regarded by European rationalism as the Bible of Rational or Natural or Universal Religion. Devendra Nath's *Brahmo Dharma* was in every sense of the term an original work presenting the author's own spiritual realisations and convictions, though these were expressed in the language of the ancient Hindu Upanishads. This book, however, was an expression of the thoughts and ideals of the Brahmo Samaj of his day; and it presented the religion of the Brahmo Samaj, which was essentially an organic revelation of a new Hindu theism in a Hindu or national garb.

Current Hinduism in those days when Devendra Nath found himself in the leadership of the Brahmo Samaj was attacked on two sides. On one side it was attacked by modern rationalism imbibed by the new generation of Bengalee youths turned out by the Hindu College. It was an attack not only against Hinduism but really against all religion. On the other side, it was attacked by Christian propaganda that claimed a higher rational basis than popular Hinduism as a system of pure monotheism repudiating not only a multiplicity of gods and goddesses but also inculcating the worship of God, Who is Spirit in "spirit and truth." It claimed superiority over popular Hinduism owing to its monotheistic theology and its repudiation of all outer ceremonialism and symbolism as necessary elements of the worship of God. Devendra Nath offered through his *Brahmo Dharma* a new defence of Hinduism against both these onslaughts. He tried to repudiate the claims of early 19th century

rationalism by a critical analysis of the authority and validity of our sense testimony. The senses work upon and through certain original intuitions of the human mind. Without these intuitions sense contacts cannot of themselves produce any knowledge of sense-objects. What the criticism of Cousin in France, Kant in Germany, and the theistic schools of Hamilton and Reid in England had done to fight the philosophy of the 19th century sensationalists and materialists, was done among us by Devendra Nath, who took up the same position as these European thinkers of the theistic school. By presenting his realisations and speculations in the terms of the Upanishads, Devendra Nath created a new pride of race and culture in the new generation of English educated Bengalees. They found that they had no need to go in search of the foundations of a modern rational faith to European and Christian thinkers. These were to be found in the teachings of their own ancient Upanishads. Devendra Nath's Brahmo Dharma thus removed the necessity of English-educated Bengalees turning to Evangelical Christianity for the satisfaction of their inner spiritual hankering or the solution of their rational doubt, Devendra Nath's Brahmo Dharma offered them a much better foundation of faith and settlement of rational doubt. Devendra Nath thus became practically the first Hindu revivalist among us after Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The Brahmo Samaj under Devendra Nath was sincerely welcomed by even the orthodox Hindu community as a refuge against Christian propaganda, and the universal unbelief which was created by the English education. Devendra Nath thus gave us a new foundation of religious belief, a new system of theistic worship, and a new ideal of piety which combined profound meditation on the lines of the Upanishads with the restrained but, therefore, nonetheless deep, emotional culture of Islam as represented by the great Sufi poets, Hafez and others.

But the great synthesis towards which this movement of Hindu Theism or Universalism was evidently moving was still far from complete. The objective was not merely to revive and modernise the ancient religion of the Hindus, or even to expand it through the assimilation of the realizations of Monotheistic Islam, but to bring within it all the great world-religions. Of these Christianity was perhaps the most active moral and spiritual force in the world of our age. And though Raja Ram Mohan Roy had tried to represent the Universal in Christianity, first, through his "Precepts of Jesus," and next, his "Three Appeals to the Christian Public"; these emphasised more the ethical note of this great world-religion rather than the essence of its spiritual contribution to the general stock of man's religious and spiritual experiences. Times were not yet ripe in the days of the Raja for a correct and living representation of the Personality of Jesus as a new revelation of God to man. Christian propagandists were more vitally interested in the dogmas of their respective Churches than in seeking the Vital Truth for which Jesus Christ stood. And until this Truth was found in the eternal verities of the universal Human consciousness and Human experience, the great Synthesis towards which the Brahmo Samaj was undoubtedly moving, would not be complete.

India had been besieged by various Christian Missions. But the great message of Christ had yet to be delivered to her people. That Message was the message of the Human Personality, as the vehicle and instrument of the carrying out of the Holy Will of God among men. This message is the soul of what all the churches use in their devotions as the Lord's Prayer: "Thy Kingdom come." "Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." This is the essence of Christ's message not only to his own time but to all time. The human individual had never been endowed with Rights, Dignities and Responsi-

bilities of his "personality" in the religion and culture of the ancient world, neither among the Jews nor among the Gentiles. The individual was only a limb, the organ of the Social Body to which he belonged. He had no rights as individual. The moral law was therefore identical with the social laws. For the first time in human history Jesus proclaimed that the individual human as the son of God was subject to a higher law than that of the society to which he belonged. That law was the law of his conscience, which was the law of His Father in Heaven delivered to his individual or personal conscience. This at once revolutionised all ancient ethical and spiritual values. The great message of Christ was the message of this new Ethics. It was the declaration of the sanctity and absolute supremacy of the individual conscience above all outside laws and authorities. And to Keshub belongs the credit of being, under the guidance of God, the bearer of this Message of Christ to his people and enriching the Synthesis of the Brahmo Samaj through the essential ethical and spiritual contributions of Christian realisation and revelation.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy had given us a Philosophy of Universal Religion. But philosophy is not religion. It is only when philosophy becomes organised in ethical exercises and disciplines and spiritual sacraments that it becomes religion. Devendra Nath gave us a national religion, on the foundations of the Raja's philosophy of Universal Religion. To Keshub however was left the work of organising the Raja's Philosophy into a real Universal Religion through new rituals, liturgies, sacraments and disciplines, wherein were sought to be brought together not only the theories and doctrines of the different world religions but also their outer vehicles and formularies to the extent that these were real vehicles of their inner religious and spiritual life, divested, however, through a process of spiritual sifting,

of their imperfections and errors and superstitions. Raja Ram Mohan Roy initiated the movement of Universal Religion in his Trust Deed of the Brahmo Samaj. Maharshi developed it into a personal religion filiated to the ancient National Thought and Theology of Hindu India. Keshub was, however, charged with another and completer mission. This Mission he conceived as the New Dispensation. And cleared of all exuberance of poetical presentation and fervent oratory, this contribution of Keshub, called by whatever name, was unique and through it he gave not only to India but to the whole modern humanity a new religious culture and a new objective of the spiritual endeavours of the Modern Man.

Herein lies the real value of a new study of his life and a new interpretation of his message.

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## CHAPTER I.

### PREPARATIONS.

It is noteworthy that whether by what people call accident or through design, Keshub's heredity and biological and social environments were peculiarly helpful to his mission in life. He was born in 1838 in Calcutta. Calcutta had already become not only the Capital of the new British Empire in India, but had also acquired great predominance as the intellectual centre not only of Bengal but indeed of the whole India, which was rapidly entering into a new epoch of its history. English education to which we owe the present Indian Renaissance had been introduced here nearly twenty years before the birth of Keshub. As the European Renaissance was the result of the revival of the learning and culture of ancient Greece and Rome, even so the present Indian Renaissance is the result of the revival of the ancient learning and culture of the Hindu or Indo-Aryan. The discovery, as it was at one time called, of Sanskrit not only quickened a new self-consciousness in the Hindu but also opened a new chapter in the history of modern European culture. The immediate result of it was the birth of a new science of Comparative Philology. The Comparative Method of research and investigation first applied to the study of philology has since been extended to other departments of modern knowledge and research, and we have to-day quite a new group of sciences built upon this method. Indirectly, therefore, modern India lent in no small measure the light of new thoughts and researches to the advanced thought and culture of the present age. The pioneers in the revival of Sanskrit

in the early 19th century in Bengal were Colebrooke and Wilson ; and Wilson was a friend and colleague of of Ram Kamal Sen, Keshub's grandfather, collaborating with him in the compilation of the first Anglo-Bengalee Dictionary.

Ram Kamal's was a remarkable personality. He received his early education in Sanskrit, and must have also acquired like the general body of middle class Bhadrals of Bengal of his time, considerable scholarship in Persian and Arabic, Persian being still the court language in the country. He also qualified himself to some extent in English before he entered life as a 'type-setter' or compositor in the new Asiatic Society's Press in Calcutta on salary of rupees eight a month. It was here that Ram Kamal found those opportunities which advanced him in life until he became one of the leaders of the Calcutta society of those days. From a humble type-setter or compositor Ram Kamal rose to the position of the "Native Secretary" of Society. From this position he became soon a member of the Council of the Asiatic Society. This was an open acknowledgment not only of the native intelligence and industry of the man but also of his learning and culture. It was here as a valued worker in the cause of Oriental learning and research that Ram Kamal made the acquaintance and won the esteem and friendship of some of the highest British officials of the day, and through their good offices he became first the Treasurer of the Calcutta Mint and then the Dewan of the Bank of Bengal, drawing Rs. 2000 a month. Dewan Ram Kamal thus became one of the leading residents of Calcutta. He built what is described by Keshub's biographer a palatial residence in the centre of the city, which became henceforth the family residence of the Sens of Colootala. It was in this big house, which still stands at the corner of Ram Kamal Sen's Lane and Muralidhar Sen's Lane which branches

out eastward from the present Central Avenue, that Keshub was born.

By wealth the Sens of Colootola took their place among the representatives of the richer classes of Calcutta society. But social rank did not go in the Hindu community with mere wealth. Caste still counted more than wealth in the determination of social precedence. By caste the Sens of Colootola were Vaidyas, who ranked next to the Brahmins in the Hindu community. Ram Kamal's original family residence was in a village—Garifa, on the banks of the Hugly or the Ganges, a few miles to the north of Calcutta. Though their caste-profession was the practice of medicine according to the Hindu system, the Vaidyas of Bengal had for many centuries past held high positions in the government and administration of the country. Before the Mahomedans they were the rulers of Bengal, and the Sens of Garifa claimed their descent from King Ballal Sen, who flourished in the 12th century, and who was the real founder of Kulinism in this province. Ballal was a great social revolutionary who used his kingly power to create a new order of Brahminical aristocracy in this province out of materials that could hardly claim this honour. The Vaidyas of Bengal were prominent leaders of the Vaishnava movement of Sree Chaitanya in the 15th century. In the court of Sirajadaulla the Vaidyas held very high positions. All this past history and traditions helped to create a great conceit of intellectual and social superiority in the general body of the Vaidyas of Bengal. The Sens of Garifa fully shared this conceit with their castemen, and the personal pre-eminence acquired by Ram Kamal in modern Calcutta society added very materially to this pride of race and blood of the Sens of Colootola. And consciously or unconsciously Keshub had his share in no small degree in this family inheritance. I note this because without it Keshub could never have been the leader of a tremendous social

revolt in our time, or the founder of a new Religion. In our own history from very early times social and religious protest and revolt and reconstruction had always been led not by men who belonged to the so-called depressed classes of society, but who claimed their inheritance in the social aristocracy of the land. Siddhartha was a prince, the son of the chief of the Sakya commonwealth. In more recent times Sree Chaitanya was a high-caste Brahmin, whose people from many generations past had been among the lawgivers of the Bengalee Hindus. The same remark applies to the case of Raja Ram Mohan also, the founder of the Brahmo Samaj. And the fact that Keshub was born in a high-caste Vaidya family whose legend claimed royal blood and whose caste-history had undoubted associations with the makers of Bengalee politics and culture under the Mahomedans, was a fact of tremendous psychological and spiritual significance.

The Sens of Garifa were Vaishnavas of the School of Sree Chaitanya. This school of Bengal Vaishnavism had developed a new theology and a new system of religious and spiritual culture. The Absolute in the speculations and realisations of Bengal Vaisnavism was a Personal God. It repudiated the abstractions of the Shankara Vedanta school of Monism, yet did not accept any manner of duality in the Ultimate Reality. "Inconceivable difference in unity and unity in difference"... "*ac-hintya vedaveda*"...has been the fundamental metaphysical basis of Bengal Vaishnavism; and it declared that in His own Being the Absolute is not "formless", but has a perfect spiritual form or body, and this body of the Absolute or Brahman is the perfected human body, not certainly made of perishable flesh but of imperishable spiritual substance. The Absolute holds in His own Being the spiritual essence and prototype of the universe. The objects both what we call inanimate and what we call animate, exist from eternity to eternity in all their perfection in the Being of the Absolute. This physical

or natural world passing through course of evolution before our eyes, the sun, the moon, the stars...the sideral kingdom; the vegetable kingdom as well as the animal kingdom;...all these by the very logic of their progressive perfectability in evolution, postulate eternally realised or perfected forms and these forms are not material but spiritual; and they all exist eternally in the Absolute, not merged in or identical with Him nor independent of or separated from Him, the relation being one of "unity in difference and difference in unity. Social evolution by the same irresistible logic similarly posits a perfected or eternally realised social order, wherein all our human affections with all their objects are found in their eternally realised or perfected state. The Absolute has therefore a spiritual society around him, and through these spiritual beings He eternally sports Himself, and realises His own affections. This, very briefly is the central note in the philosophy of the Absolute or Brahman in Bengal Vaishnavism. Brahman is not without form, but has a perfected spiritual form of His own, and in this spiritual form Brahman is fundamentally human. The Divine is therefore not a denial of the human, but its perfection. This note of Humanity is a fundamental note in the philosophy of the Bengal schools of Vaishnavism. The world is real, not an illusion. Domestic and social relations are real. The human affections are real. This body and these senses are in their spiritual essence and implication, real. It is not by repudiating these realities or abjuring them as snares of evil but through their normal development, purification and spiritual illumination and enjoyment, that we must seek and find God within and outside ourselves. True it is that popular Vaishnavism, like all popular religions, had little knowledge and much less understanding of these subtle truths. But they unconsciously worked at the back of the cultural evolution of the Bengalee people for centuries past. In fact, the origin

of this Vaishnavic ideal of humanity could perhaps be traced to the Buddhistic culture of Bengal. Keshub must have received considerable inspiration from his Vaishnavic heredity in his mental illuminations, and in delivering the great message of Humanity with which he was charged.

In this he differed materially from his predecessors in the leadership of the Brahmo Samaj. Raja Ram Mohan's theology was essentially Vedantic of the Shankara school of absolute monism. Of the two strains that met through his parents in Raja Ram Mohan Roy, namely, Shakta and Vaishnava, the former more or less completely overwhelmed the latter. The Raja could hardly tolerate the humanistic note of Bengal Vaishnavism. The carnal aberrations and sensual excesses of popular Vaishnavic cult in Bengal of his days dominated by the Sahajeeva school, which practically ignored the very first aphorism of the philosophy of emotional culture, that called for complete purification of the senses and the spiritualisation of all our appetites as the condition-*precedent* of the pursuit of Vaishnavic *bhakti* or devotion, must have naturally turned the Raja's bowels against it. The Raja's humanism was partly a contribution of his Vedantic synthesis, and partly, if indeed not largely, derived from his studies of modern European thought, particularly the practical message of Christianity.... "The Precepts of Jesus, A Guide to Peace and Happiness." But man is never found in the philosophy of his Brahmoism as fundamentally divine not only in his inner spirit, but even in the very "form" of his personality. Man's form or body is not only in its physical contents but even in the spiritual idea or pattern after which this outer physical organisation is shaped, "mayic" and not "paramarthic" is of the category of appearance not of reality. The cultivation of the religious emotions through purified human affections had, therefore, no place in the devotional culture of the Raja's Brahmoism. In any case, it was not a clear and distinctive note in the Raja's culture.

Maharshi Devendra Nath's philosophy and realisation were not inspired by Vedantic monism. In fact, the Maharshi to the very end of his days had an unspeakable dread of this monism as destructive of the very foundation of the Divine Personality on the one hand, and of the cultivation of direct and personal devotion or *bhakti* to Brahman, on the other. Maharshi's interpretation of the Upanishads was neither Vedantic nor Vaishnava, but pre-eminently Islamic; and it was Islamic *bhakti* or devotions that could not tolerate the least little suspicion of anthropomorphism in its conception of the Deity or of any manner of symbolism in its realisation of the love of God, from which Devendra Nath drew his deepest inspiration of his religious life and emotional culture. Neither Ram Mohan nor Devendra Nath could, therefore, filiate the theology and devotion of the Brahmo Samaj to the highest philosophy of God in Man and Man in God, which Keshub was able to do, particularly in his maturer thoughts and realisations. And this was largely due to the inspirations of his Vaishnavic heredity. Even the burning sense of sin that Keshab brought to the ethical and spiritual life of the Brahmo Samaj, and initiated the Conscience Movement among us, though obviously Christian, both in its norm and form, must have in his subliminal consciousness had its origin in his Vaishnavic heredity, because in Vaishnavic piety there has been an element of self-abasement that is not without very intimate affinities with the Christian dogma of sin. Neither in the philosophy of Raja Ram Mohan Roy nor in the speculation and realisations of Maharshi Devendra Nath do we find any marked note of this consciousness of sin. Sin is a disease of the *will*, and though the discipline of the *will* is an essential element of spiritual culture of both the Raja and the Maharshi, sin in their philosophy is practically a form of ugliness, a lack of correct understanding and true illumination and not *wilful disobedience* of the laws of God. True it is that

Keshub also did not look upon sin as something positive and in that sense real, still as long as the conflict between sin and virtue lasted, it was not a thing to be airily ignored. Sin is like darkness, which is really only *want* of light. Light is the positive thing; darkness is mere absence of it. Even so purity and perfection that are contents and elements of the very being of the Lord are positive things and sin is only the absence of this purity and perfection in His children.

As his heredity helped Keshub very materially in furnishing some of the vital equipments for his mission in life, so also did the environments in the midst of which he found himself at his birth. English education and British administration brought a new inspiration of freedom to his people. This freedom had been from time immemorial a predominant note in the culture and consciousness of the Bengalees. Bengal had been very largely non-Aryan and entirely Budhistic in the early centuries of its history. The Bengalee race is a mixed race, and this mixture of blood and culture contributed from the very beginning to differentiate Bengalee character, both physiological and mental, from that of the other peoples of India. Inside the unity of a common culture, there are undeniable differentiations in the physiological and mental and even social structures of the different Indian provinces. The Bengalee type psychometrically is very much unlike the pure Aryan type of Kashmir, for instance, and the Dravidian type of the South. Mentally also inside the same larger Indian unity there are peculiarities in the very mould of the thought of Bengal that mark this people out from the other peoples of India. Grammar and logic and law have been the special field of operation of the Bengalee Brahmin in the general Indo-Aryan culture of India. Bengal even in recent times founded a new school of logic, while the Hindu Law of Bengal, the *Dayabhaga*, has been different from the *Mitakshara*, that governs the rest of Hindu India. *Daya-*



*bhaga* built up a social structure of which the fundamental feature has been the economic freedom or independence of the individual, all property being vested unreservedly in the individual owner and not, as under the *Mitakshara law*, in the family. From time immemorial the basis of Bengalee social structure has thus been not the family unit but the individual. This has materially helped to develop the spirit of freedom of the Bengalee people. Another special note or feature of the provincial culture and character of Bengal has been humanity. All the gods and goddesses of the popular Bengalee pantheon are essentially human. In Durga, the ten-handed goddess, or Kalee, the grim goddess with four hands, as well as in Lakshmi and Saraswatee. their supernatural or superhuman number of hands notwithstanding, the human figure and physiognomy overwhelm the vision and emotions of their worshippers. In them the characteristics of human motherhood push back these super-human additions. Bengal Hinduism has hardly any recognised place for the non-human gods of the other parts of India. The two most popular gods in Bengal are Siva and Krishna, and the humanity of both is impossible to ignore. Sree Krishna, especially is human,—the representation of that perfection of the human form, which the progressive evolution of it establishes by its inexorable logic; the fore-handed or six-handed form of Sree Krishna are not his real and eternal form, which is always two-handed. The four-handed and six-handed forms are conjured up by individual devotees for their own satisfaction. This is clearly asserted in the scriptures of Bengal Vaishnavism. All these are incontrovertible evidences of the note of humanity of the Bengalee consciousness and culture.

English education and contact with modern European culture therefore did not bring anything to the English-educated Bengalee, that was entirely foreign to his inner instincts. On the contrary, it had a powerful appeal to

him because of its fundamental affinity with the age-long spirit of the Bengalee culture and character. Brahminism really was an exotic in this province. The Brahminical social laws were super-imposed upon the great bulk of the Bengalee people, who had been Buddhists. These were, except where they were able to filiate themselves to the original Buddhistic philosophy and social structure of the people, more or less rootless. It was, therefore, that the inspiration of the new illumination which the British brought with them to Bengal was able so easily to provoke a movement of social and religious revolt in and through the first generation of the educated young men turned out by the Hindu college. It was a revolt of individual reason against the authority of ancient and mediæval scriptures and traditions, a reavolt of the individual conscience against the tyranny of caste and custom and a general revolt all round against established Brahminical theology or mythology and social hierarchy. For twenty years or so this revolt had been working in the new generation of Bengalees, when Keshub was born in very midcurrent of it.

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## CHAPTER II.

### COLLEAGUES AND CO-WORKERS.

Ancient traditions, specially in mediæval or *pauranic* Hindu culture which represents what may be described as the imaginative stage of the evolution [of religion, wherein the highest generalisations of spiritual experiences and philosophic thoughts and speculations in regard to the Absolute are clothed in the forms of the highest religious imagination creating symbols and legends,..... speak of the advent of their colleagues more or less simultaneously with the chief or leader or *avatar* of every epoch-making religious and spiritual movement. These leaders, call them by whatever name we may, whether *avatars* or Messiahs or messengers of God, do not appear on the stage of human history singly, but bring with them all the helpers that gather around and co-operate with them in later life in the fulfilment of the great mission with which they are charged. We may not, in fact, we cannot rationally accept the popular interpretation of it. But the fact is undeniable that these men come as the centre of a large movement of religious, social and spiritual reform or revolution in which others also have their necessary place and function.

It is worthy of note that Keshub came at a time in the history of our country which produced quite a number of men variously equipped to collaborate with him towards the fulfilment of the mission, of which he was certainly the highest instrument and embodiment. Keshub was a product of his time, so were also these others, who in mature manhood gathered around him from far and near, and constituted the new apostolate of which Keshub was the acknowledged and undoubted leader.

Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, who was known, particularly in Europe and America, as Keshub's most capable lieutenant, was born in 1840, two years after Keshub. By caste a Vaidya, he was related to Keshub. Pratap's grandfather married a niece of Keshub's grandfather, Ram Kamal Sen. "We all belonged to the same village," writes Pratap, though he spent the first eight years of his life at Garifa, and Keshub lived in Calcutta almost entirely. When Pratap was taken to live and be educated in Calcutta, a boy of nine years at the time, his house and that of the Sens at Colootola were only a few feet apart, and being nearly of the same age as Keshub, besides being a relative, they grew very friendly to each other, and this friendship laid the foundations of their later relation in life, when Pratap joined the Brahmo Samaj under Maharshi Devendra Nath. When Keshub left the Adi Brahmo Somaj, as a protest against the Maharshi's toleration of caste in the appointment of the ministers of the Samaj, Pratap also joined him and became with Keshub and others one of the founders of the Bharatavarsheeya Brahmo Samaj or the Brahmo Samaj of India in 1869. Like Keshub, Pratap also served for some time as a clerk in the Bank of Bengal. When, however, the call came for consecrated service in the mission work of the Brahmo Samaj, Pratap resigned from his place in the Bank and joined the mission work of the Samaj. Three years after Keshub's English visit Pratap also went to England on the same mission. Later he paid another visit to the West and went to America.

The Brahmo Samaj from the days of Raja Ram Mohan Roy had been devoted to the cultivation of the different types of piety represented by the great world religions, and to the study of different world scriptures. The Christian side of the mission of the Brahmo Samaj was represented through Raja Ram Mohan Roy himself, first, in his collection of "The Percepts of Jesus :

A Guide to Peace and Happiness," which was followed by his "Three Appeals to the Christian Public." Maharshi Devendra Nath had little or no appreciation of the universal aspects and contributions of Christian thought and piety. The universalism of Raja Ram Mohan was practically ignored by the Hindu nationalistic and Upanishadic emphasis of the Maharshi. When Keshub broke away from the Adi Brahmo Samaj, he revived the cultivation of the Raja's universalism. In this new culture different missionaries of the new Samaj under Keshub were appointed for the study of different religions. Pratap was specially charged with the study and realisations of the highest Christian experiences. The result was embodied in his "Oriental Christ," Pratap's "Spirit of God" and "Heart Beats" along with his "Oriental Christ" have secured for him a place among the greatest spiritual teachers of the West, beginning with Marcus Aurilius and ending with Christian saints and seers. Pratap stands thus to the modern Western theistic thinkers as the most powerful lieutenant of Keshub.

While Pratap brought, in a special sense and degree, the contributions of the deepest Christian piety and culture to the new synthesis of the Brahmo Samaj under Keshub, to Bijay Krishna belongs in the providence of God the credit of bringing the contributions of Vaishnavic *bhakti*, particularly of the Bengal school of Sree Chaitanya to this great synthesis. Bijay Krishna was born in 1841. He was three years younger than Keshub. In his heredity and early education and environment Bijay Krishna, unlike Pratap Chandra, had no affinities or associations with Keshub or the movement of the Raja. Bijay Krishna was a direct descendant of Advaitacharya, one of the acknowledged leaders and teachers of the Chaitanya movement. His family had, for generations, been the spiritual preceptors of large numbers of Vaishnava families, particularly in north Bengal. Bijay Krishna was brought up for the profession

of his fathers, and received his education in and through the Vaishnavic scriptures. He did not go to any English school. The revolt against his hereditary profession and faith was not inspired directly or indirectly by modern influences. He was born in Shantipur and did not come in contact with the Calcutta community until he broke away from Vaishnavic orthodoxy, and repudiated his hereditary profession as a lie and a wrong, and chose medicine as his life-work, for which he came to Calcutta, and entered himself as a student in the vernacular department of the Medical College. In course of his ministrations as a Vaishnava *guru* young Bijay Krishna accidentally had made the acquaintance of a small group of Brahmo worshippers in Bogra. Hearing that he had come to Calcutta and of the spiritual struggle through which he was passing, these friends of his asked him to seek the acquaintance of Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore. That was how Bijay Krishna found himself one evening in the Adi Brahmo Samaj, and received from the Maharshi's Service and Sermons a new peace in his soul and a new inspiration in his life. Keshub had already joined the Brahmo Samaj, and had been ordained a minister of the Samaj by the Maharshi. Bijay Krishna soon came to know them both, and was gradually moved to consecrate his life to the propagation of the new gospel. A conscience movement initiated by Keshub in the Brahmo Samaj that ultimately forced the first schism found in Bijay Krishna its first and always its most powerful advocate and exponent. Bijay Krishna next to Keshub, in fact, led the movement of revolt against the Maharshi and the authorities of the Adi Brahmo Samaj and later on, on the establishment of the Brahmo Samaj of India, he became one of its most powerful spiritual and devotional influences.

The year 1841, which saw the birth of Bijay Krishna also, is noted in the history of the Brahmo movement as the year of birth of Aghore Nath Gupta. Aghore Nath's family like that of Bijay Krishna belonged to the village

of Shantipur, associated so prominently with the movement of Sree Chaitanya. Like Bijay Krishna, Aghore Nath received his early education in Sanskrit in a local school or *tol*, from where he came to Calcutta and took his admission in the Sanskrit College. Bijay Krishna had also joined this institution, and it was under his influence that Aghore Nath was gradually drawn to the Brahmo Samaj. If the spirit of abandon that marked the *bhakti* movement of Sree Chaitanya was the outstanding note in Bijay Krishna's personality and character, the quietitude of the *yogi* soon became the characteristic of Aghore Nath's spiritual culture and character. Keshub, who was endowed in a very special degree with insight into the inner nature of his associates and colleagues, appointed Aghore Nath to the study of the Buddhist Dispensation, not only with help of grammar and lexicon but far more in the light of his personal realisations. Aghore Nath, however, was not permitted to complete his special work. Providence called him away just at the time when its great promise was attracting attention. Like Bijay Krishna, and unlike Pratap Chandra, Aghore Nath was drawn to the Brahmo Samaj by the inspiration of his Vaishnavic heredity, and the questioning into the soul of religion and character of the Divine unity or personality which his Sanskrit studies, particularly those of the Vedanta, provoked.

If Pratap Chandra brought to the new synthesis of the Brahmo Samaj the contributions of Christian universalism, and Bijay Krishna those of Vaishnavic *bhakti*, and Aghore Nath, more by his personal realisations and character, brought to it in the earlier years the message and experiences of what may be called the universalism of that God-union or *yoga* which was pursued by Buddhism, in a special degree even without the help and inspiration of any theistic theology, it was Gour Govinda Roy to whom the Brahmo Samaj was indebted for bringing to it in a special sense the message of that larger

Hinduism wherein is found a profound synthesis of the Upanishads and the Puranas. Both Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore had practically ignored the supreme value of Pauranic Hinduism, with all its exuberance of rites and symbols notwithstanding, to the fullest and highest religious and spiritual life of man. It was Gour Govinda Roy who, under Keshub's inspiration, brought the contributions of this phase of Hindu thought and realisations to the Brahmo synthesis. He was associated in the first scriptural compilation of the Brahmo Samaj, the *Slokasangaraha* that for a long time, after the first schism in the Samaj, continued to be a material help in the cultivation of that spiritual kinship with all the great world-religions, which has been a distinctive feature of the spiritual exercises and devotions of the Brahmo Samaj. Later in life Gour Govinda Roy was charged by Keshub with the task of giving to his generation a life of Sree Krishna, the apostle of the first movement of synthesis and harmony in religion. A man of great learning and accurate scholarship, no one associated with the Brahmo Movement was better fitted to present the philosophy of Keshub's New Dispensation or the Religion of Harmony as Gour Govinda Roy, who represented in the simplicity of his life, the purity of his character and his selfless devotion to the study of Truth, the age-long spirit of the highest Brahminical culture. He was not educated in English and entered life as a police official. While stationed at Rangpore in this capacity young Gour Govinde met Aghore Nath, and under the influence of the life and character of this saintly Brahmo missionary, he joined the Brahmo Samaj, and giving up his secular occupation joined the mission work of the Samaj, throwing all his earthly burdens upon Providence.

If Gour Govinda Roy brought to the new synthesis of the Brahmo Samaj the contribution of Hindu



universalism as gradually evolved through the whole course of Hindu thoughts and realisations, starting with the Vedas and culminating in the latest of the Puranas, Girish Chandra Sen brought to it the contributions of Islamic experiences and realisations. He translated the Islamic scriptures into Bengali, and placed in the hands of the Brahmo devotees the inestimable treasures of the deeper devotions of Mahomedan saints. Islam had been woefully misrepresented to the new generation of English-educated Bengalees. The popular estimate of Islam was of a narrow and intolerant dogmatism that stood before the world with sword in one hand and the Koran in the other. The generation to which Keshub belonged was brought up in this falsehood, as we now know it to be from our larger knowledge of Islamic culture and traditions. But the innate spiritual intuitions of Keshub that believed every great religion to be a special Dispensation of God designed for the elevation and illumination of different races of men at different epochs of their history, could not accept this popular estimate of a world-religion that had for centuries shaped and moulded the destinies of such large masses of humanity. The studies and researches into the scriptures and devotional literature of Islam to which Girish Chandra Sen was specially directed to devote himself, brought to the verification of Keshub's innate intuitions regarding Islam materials of supreme cultural and spiritual value. Girish Chandra Sen's translation of the Koran and Hadis is in itself a monumental work. while the six volumes of the lives of Moslem saints, translated from the original Persian, take their place with the lives of Hindu devotees, the Bhaktamal, in the literature of Bhakti in Bengali Lending to our national Bhakti movement the vision of the Universal, demonstrating the great truth that the highest and deepest love of God and the beautitudes of the soul's experiences of the Providence of the Lord are

quite possible in and through a theology and a religious culture that has not only no place for but which is even angrily intolerant of all forms of image worship and of all suspicion of anthropomorphic imagination. Girish Chandra was born in 1835, or three years before Keshub. He belonged to Eastern Bengal, and the meagre education which he received in his boyhood was in Persian. He hardly came in contact, until he joined the Brahmo Samaj, with the new intellectual and moral forces let loose upon Bengalee society of those days by the Hindu College in Calcutta, and was, therefore, an example of the working of those mysterious psychological and spiritual influences that brought together from different parts of the country materials for the building up of the Brahmo apostolate.

The story of the life of Trailokya Nath Sanyal and his conversion to the new religious cult and culture of which Keshub had already become the acknowledged centre and leader, reads like a page from mediæval religious history and quickens almost a sense of the miraculous. Born in 1840, Trailokya Nath received a very meagre education in Bengalee at the village school. His native genius for versification and music drove or drew him to a company of *kaviwalas*, who sang ballads, old and new, and gave performances to village folks in competition with rival companies. Trailokya Nath's native aptitude for composing *impromptu* verses as well as musical genius attracted the notice of these ballad-mongers, and they wanted him to join their troupe. His association with these people did not help his moral nature or intellectual life. But Providence had designed his life for a higher purpose. A temporary sojourn in Calcutta helped him to come in contact with the new Brahmo Samaj movement, towards which he at once felt attracted. His conversion came, however, at Dinajpur where he was serving at the time as a teacher in a vernacular school. It was here that he made the acquaintance of Bijoy

Krishna, whose noble character and sweet devotion effected a change of heart in him. A few days later at a serious crisis in his moral life Trailokya Nath left his home, quietly and joined Bijoy Krishna who was staying then at Shantipur. Bijoy Krishna seeing the earnestness of the young man initiated him into Brahmoism. Then came his acquaintance with Aghore Nath; and this "remarkable trio," Bijoy Krishna, Aghore Nath and Trailokya Nath undertook a missionary expedition to East Bengal. Subsequently he met Keshub and was ordained by him as a missionary of the Brahmo Samaj in 1870. From a poetestar in the employ of a troupe of ballad singers Trailokya Nath's association with the Brahmo Samaj made him the maker of a body of remarkable hymns in Bengalee that have contributed for more than forty years to the development of modern religious and spiritual life in Bengal not only in, but even outside the Brahmo Samaj. By his prose writings under the pen-name of Cheeranjeeba Sharma, Trailokya Nath created a body of religious literature in Bengalee which will always secure for him a recognised position in modern Bengalee literature. His life of Jesus and Sree Chaitanya were the first of their kind in Bengalee. From the day of his ordination as a Brahmo missionary, Trailokya Nath set to inspiring music the prayers and sermons of Keshub. When the petty controversies that rent the Brahmo Samaj after the Cooch Behar marriage have been justly forgotten, the hymns of Trailokya Nath or the singing apostle will remain as a source of perennial inspiration to Bengalee souls thirsting after God. And these hymns are a greater evidence than anything else of the work of the Spirit in the Brahmo Samaj movement in Bengal.

Like Pratap Chandra Mazumdar and very much unlike Trailokya Nath Sanyal, Gour Govinda Roy and Girish Chandra Sen, Mahondra Nath Bose, born in the same year as Keshub, had been brought up under the

new influences created by English education in the Province Born near Calcutta (Halisahar). Mahendra Nath was educated in the Free Church Institution in Calcutta founded by Dr. Alexander Duff, and developed a great love for the Christian view of life. Mahendra Nath would have possibly accepted Christianity as the gospel of human salvation if he had not come under the influence of Keshub, whom he saw for the first time when the latter went on a missionary visit to Mahendra Nath's native village, and was ordained in 1865 as a missionary of the Brahmo Samaj. Mahendra Nath's special contribution to the synthetic culture of the Brahmo Samaj was drawn from the scripture of the Shikhs which he studied in the original and published a Bengalee life of Baba Nanak, which was the first of its kind. Mahendra Nath, at the time of his renunciation, was employed under the East Indian Railway, drawing a respectable salary : But he could not resist the call of the Brahmo Samaj, and threw himself without a thought for the morrow into the missionary work of the Samaj, immediately before Keshub and his youthful companions broke away from Maharshi Devendra Nath.

Besides those who worked for the cultural synthesis of the Brahmo Samaj, a number of others drawn to the movement partly by its intellectual and moral message and partly, if indeed not in a larger measure by Keshub's attractive personality, joined the new Brahmo apostolate and helped to build up the Brahmo missionary organisation, which was essential not only for general propaganda but far more to help the spiritual culture and evolution of its leader. Keshub was so constituted that self-expression was from the beginning of his religious life an essential condition of his spiritual evolution. Keshub used to say that he was his first audience, and all his speeches and sermons were really directed towards himself. But a sympathetic congregation, responsive to the impulses of the minister was an essential condition

precedent of the latter's self-unfolding. This is no new experience in spiritual history. Every great teacher had this vehicle for their self-revelation and realisation. Jesus had his twelve disciples. The Buddha had also his intimate associates like Ananda, who helped to draw his spirit out. Our own Shree Chaitanya had his *ishta-goshtee* or spiritual family or clan, his Gadadhar, Govinda, Sribash and others, besides Rai Ramananda and Sarva-bhaum Bhattacharya who brought their cultural contribution and high spiritual realisation to the new Bhakti movement in Bengal, who supplied to the Mahapravru suitable settings and vehicles for his divine ecstatic experiences. Keshub also needed from the very beginning similar settings and vehicles for the pursuit and realisation of his great mission in life. These were furnished by his colleagues and co-workers, some of whom brought to the new Brahmo synthesis their studies of other religious systems, like, for instance, Bijay Krishna and Aghore Nath and Gour Govinda and Pratap Chandra and Girish Chandra, but others brought to the new apostolate personal loyalty and devotion to the master and by the very exuberance of their loyalty to him helped even more than his cultural co-workers to draw out the wealth of his emotional and spiritual life.

Kanti Chandra Mitra was the guardian of the movement on the material side. He was the general provider of the wants of the missionaries and their families. Amrita Lal Bose was in special charge of the Brahmo Youngmen's boarding or Niketan, and Umanath Gupta, who was personally the most devoted to Keshub, of all his colleagues and co-workers. The simplicity of his mind and faith led him to accept everything that Keshub said or did without question as the law of his inner and outer life. Prasanna Kumar Sen brought to the movement the spirit of loyal service and efficient conduct of the outer work of the new apostolate. Prasanna Kumar, born in the same year as Keshub in Keshub's ancestral

village, was a distant relation of the latter. After leaving school he took service under the E. I Ry., and by his devotion to his work, his resourcefulness, energy and efficiency, he gradually rose to a high position in the Audit Department of the Railway. When the call came to him he gave up his office that brought him a very good income according to the estimates of those days. Prasanna Kumar "with his tireless energy and eminently practical bent of mind was Keshub's right hand in carrying out his ideas effectively." Kedar Nath De brought to the new movement a new type of piety. While the other members of the new apostolate worked in different directions that brought them prominently before the public eye. Kedar Nath "lived his life of silent suffering and resignation never caring to ask the world to record his spiritual struggles and victories." Born in 1837, Kedar Nath, after leaving school, was employed in the Military Accounts Department. When he was drawing a high salary, and just at the time when the head of his office was arranging to secure a lift for him, Kedar Nath heard the call and without a moment's thought gave up his secular work. He brought to the new apostolate an example of loyalty to Truth and Conscience, and a spirit of self-denial which were of no mean value to the spiritual acquisitions of the new movement. Resigning from his office he found himself with his large family in a state of almost abject poverty. The change was terrible. But the privations were borne bravely supported by a rare resignation on the providence of God. Keshub following the apostles of other Dispensations had called from his missionary brotherhood complete renunciation of the world and the willing acceptance of poverty as part of their spiritual discipline. And in Kedar Nath was found perhaps the best example of this renunciation. "Equally anxious to avoid the heat of controversy and the chill apathy of partisanship his was a life of noble

sacrifice of which there have been few parallels in the Samaj."

These colleagues and co-workers of Keshub were born about the same time as himself. They, had their early upbringing under very different conditions, still they were drawn by some mysterious forces or as they themselves believed, by the overruling providence of God Himself into the new religious and spiritual movement in the province, of which Keshub had already become the soul and centre, and it is no wonder, therefore, that when he developed the theory of a new apostolate or the New Dispensation, Keshub read into their life and conversion a direct deputation of all these people and himself as part of them by God for the declaration of the new gospel. It was in this way that these colleagues and co-workers of Keshub helped to develop the idea of his apostleship. Others might look upon the story of the building up of his missionary body with Keshub as their soul and centre as due to mere accident, but Keshub never believed in accidents. "Not a sparrow fell unless it was willed by God." The organisation of the Brahmo missionary body under Keshub was never regarded by him as due to accident but, on the contrary, he believed that it was pre-designed by the Everlasting God, and the mutual relations between these different missionaries and himself, though expressed to us in time are really beyond time, eternal. From eternity to eternity Keshub belonged to these intimate colleagues and co-workers of his and they belonged to him as members of a spiritual fellowship, and they were all sent by God to earth to carry on as a corporate body the mission with which they were charged. Whatever be the rational value of this theory, no one can ignore the mysterious influences that brought these various men together and inspired the great sacrifices they made from the world's point of view to serve the cause under whose banner they flocked.

## CHAPTER III.

### IN TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY.

In his later days when Keshub was cultivating a perpetual consciousness of Providence in all the inner and outer affairs of his life and deliberately refused to seek intellectual illumination or moral guidance or spiritual inspiration except directly from his God, he declared that he did not read one book in 365 days of the year. This was, however, not true of his youthful student days, when he was known among his brother students in the Hindu College as a most voracious reader. Keshub first went to the Hindu College and was there in the highest class of the school department in 1852 at the age of fourteen, when owing to some difference between some of the leading Hindu residents of Calcutta and the authorities of the Hindu College, a new institution under the name of the Metropolitan College was started and Keshub as a representative of the Sans of Colootola was withdrawn from the Hindu College and placed in the new institution. The authorities of the new Metropolitan College somewhat unwisely and, as Keshub's biographer says, more out of regard for his family than in consideration of his personal equipment, placed him in a higher class than he was really fit for. The result was very serious strain upon the youthful mind of Keshub, and particularly as the mathematical text-books of this class was far beyond Keshub's preparatory training for these studies, it gave him an inveterate distaste for these. Keshub never got rid of it even when after the abolition of the Metropolitan College he came back to the Hindu College. In the Metropolitan College, however, he received very considerable help and encouragement in his literary studies under Captain D. L. Richardson, who was universally



acknowledged in those days as the greatest Shakesperean scholar in this country. He continued these literary studies with rare devotion after coming back to the Hindu College, and added to these new studies in mental and moral philosophy, while he was excused from continuing his mathematical studies,.....trigonometry and conic sections—to which he could never apply himself for its public examination. This, however, did not interfere with his general mental training and culture. Though without any certificate of proficiency from the College and the educational authorities, Keshub came out of his College in 1858 at the age of 20, just one year after the establishment of the Calcutta University, as the best educated and cultured young man of his time. From 1856 to 1858 he spent specially in the study of mental and moral philosophy. At this time Sir William Hamilton and Reid were his favourite authors. His philosophical studies were, however, not confined to these only. The French philosopher Victor Cousin, the English philosophers Coleridge, Morel and M'Cosh also contributed very materially to Keshub's cultural self-education. It was through these studies that Keshub found support for his faith in man's intuitive knowledge of God. One may not be very far from wrong to think that it was from some of these European thought-leaders of the 19th century that he imbibed the philosophical ground of his later development by means of which he was able to correct the earlier doctrine of intuition that accepted the intuitions of the individual reason as the exclusive test of truth and ignored the verification of these subjective intuitions by corresponding objective manifestation of them. Keshub's doctrine of Christ not merely as an idea or ideal but also as a historical personality objectively embodying that idea or ideal must have been suggested by M'Cosh, though Keshub never accepted the limitations of the philosophy of Christ of M'Cosh.

In general literature Young's "Night Thoughts" and Shakespeare's "Hamlet" were his greatest favourites. The American Unitarian divines, Channing and Parker, also contributed very materially to Keshub's intellectual and theological education. His biographer and life-long friend, Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, has left a pen picture of Keshub as he was about this time, which throws considerable light upon his youthful character and education.

"He was morose sad and stern when he was twenty years old. Novel-reading was an abomination unto him, though everybody around him read works of fiction. Love-songs he abhorred and fled from, though his friends sang them. He was constantly alone. Few followed him, few loved him. He was most scrupulous in spending his little youthful money, and his long youthful days. Could any one detect him gossiping or laughing or exchanging jokes and compliments? Neither did he eat fish nor meat. He shunned the company of his fond girlish wife, so much so that she often accused him of hating her, and wished for her own death. Rigorous and truthful in speech, he was a youth of so few words that his neighbour blamed him for being proud, contemptuous, unsociable young man. If he read much, and in those days he did read much, he read austere books of moral philosophy or fiery sermons, or hard intellectual compositions, hating poetry and fiction alike. We remember him *like* only two poetical works, one was Young's Night Thoughts, and the other was Shakespeare's Hamlet. Both these accorded well with his sombre moral temperament. He was tall, thin, lank, bony. I believe he sometimes wept alone, but I never saw him weep, only his face was sad. He took long solitary walks on the terrace in the darkness of night. He wrote secret prayers which he read by himself, he indited solemn warnings for passers-by which he stuck up

on the house walls. He was a regular youthful John the Baptist. Thus did my friend lay the rocky foundations of a pure character, when he was twenty. Such was the stern, gaunt, unattractive skeleton he was in those days."

Even as a young man of twenty, Keshub felt the need of self-expression very keenly, at first, when he had no vehicle for it and hardly could dare to organise one. This need of self-expression was met by mental prayer. "Why and for what I prayed I did not know," says Keshub in that remarkable series of sermons styled "Jeevan-Veda" or the "Revelation of My Life." "But in the first glimmer of light that came to me I heard the voice—Pray, pray, without prayer there is no other way." This was really young Keshub's first vehicle of self-expression. He used to write out his prayers, one in the morning and another at night. This habit of prayer as yet without any clear consciousness or realisation for the Divine Personality to whom the prayer was addressed, was in reality psychologically his first instrument of self-expression. Constitutionally made to be a teacher of men, a messenger of God to fellow human beings, Keshub received his first training in this commission through this prayer. Prayer to him at this time was itself a "Personality." "If anyone said anything I used to close my eyes and cry out mentally—prayer, where art Thou? I am in difficulty, come to me. I did not know my own mother tongue well at that time, and was not able to give expression to my prayers in literary form. I could not hold my ideas together. Sitting by the window I opened my eyes and uttered in prayer one single word. That was enough; that brought me unutterable joy. I received treasures of great value, and I asked myself to whom shall I give this invaluable gem? To whom shall I communicate it? In this way my time used to pass in those days,"

But these subjective exercises were not found enough for long. Keshub started a literary society as well as "a multitude of classes, clubs and organisations of all sorts for the benefit (as his biographer says) of his companions." This however was not the real motive of these youthful efforts. That motive was the irrepressible position for self-expression of the young apostle. Later in life Keshub used to say that in all his ministrations, his sermons and lectures, he was his first audience. He addressed these primarily to himself for his own profit. The congregation came next, if it came at all, to his thoughts. Keshub in his early youthful days had not become conscious of himself ; had not acquired the habit of analysing his own mind and thought. But this same passion for self-expression and self-fulfilment through self-expression was a constituent element of his mind and soul. This was really the Regulative Idea of all his youthful activity and evolution.

When he was still in college Keshub organised a stage for the presentation of Hamlet. Keshub himself played the leading part. He had, as his biographer said, the constitution of the Danish prince by nature. The year previous to leaving college, Keshub established an important institution, which he called the "Goodwill Fraternity." It was the first platform of Keshub and it was here that he received his first training for the future Ministry. Keshub often preached here extempore in English with great enthusiasm. "Nay all his intelligence, energy and moral earnestness became ignited with an ascetic glow that burned fiercely in him. Every young man who heard him became similarly excited. He drew men chiefly by his enthusiasm. He spoke loud and long, poured forth a torrent of words and feelings, becoming often hoarse and exhausted at the end of his discourse."

In the third chapter of his autobiography (Jeevan-Veda), Keshub has placed on record how in very early youth he received what he styles his baptism in fire,.....

*"agni-mantre diksha."* This "fire" was not any trial or tribulation in his outer life. It was the fire of his own soul. His inborn passion for self-expression. From the days of the Goodwill Fraternity Keshub could never rest unless he found adequate opportunities for this fiery self expression. Sombre and always strictly conscientious in whatever he wrote or said so that there might not be any discrepancy between his inner sentiments and their outer expression, Keshub was never "cold" or calculating. He spoke and wrote with an abandon that always fascinated those, whether young or old, who happened to listen to him. This passion, for fiery self-expression, lasted throughout the whole of his life. He was certainly a great actor. If he had been called to the stage, he would have undoubtedly made his mark as the greatest actor of his age. The histrionic faculty is inborn in almost every born orator. Keshub had it in unstinted measure. But even as an actor he was intensely real. It was seen when he played Hamlet, and the hero in the Bengalee drama *Bidhaba Bibaha Natak* in his young school days. It was seen in his maturer age when he played in the drama, specially composed for the purpose, *Nava-Brindaban*, under his inspiration, by Trailokya Nath Sanyal, which he adopted as a vehicle for the message of his New Dispensation. All through life Keshub sought this fiery self-expression, whether through the press or through the platform, or in his Services and Sermons from the pulpit. Cold sentiment or cold expression was to Keshub the symbol of spiritual death. Old ideas are inevitably cold. Familiar thoughts and sentiments clothed in familiar words or imagery inevitably fail to rouse new passion or enthusiasm as much in the speaker as in his audience, and Keshub throughout his life avoided these almost as poison. In boyhood and early youth the same playthings could never satisfy him for long. During his school days he was fascinated by some magical per-

formance, given to the boys by an English magician. Keshub at once applied himself to the study of this art and reproduced many of the mysteries of this English magician. He invited his friends to witness his performance. But the thing failed to keep his enthusiasm for long, and he did not repeat this performance. This was characteristic of the man. He read much no doubt in those days, but he thought more and tried to reproduce the sentiments and emotions of the books that he read in himself. In this way Keshub acquired by self-effort an education and a wide culture in which he had very few equals in the young men of his generation. The real secret of Keshub's phenomenal success when he appeared as a public lecturer, was due entirely to the fact that he rode on the crest of the highest thought and culture of his age to which he brought not only his acquisitions from books but what was of far greater value his personal experiences and realisations of the teachings of old and modern masters. He was at this time a very diligent student of the Bible. Shakespeare and next to it the New Testament particularly brought to Keshub his large wealth of pure English diction and helped him to become the greatest living orator in English of his day. As regards his own mother-tongue it is difficult to say if he had any intimate acquaintance with the Bengalee literature, old or new. The new Bengalee literature was in Keshub's youthful days hardly born; the Tattva-bodhini Sabha and the Tattva-bodhini Patrika had initiated a renaissance in Bengalee literature. Pandit Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Babu Akshay Kumar Datta, Devendra Nath himself had been creating this new Bengalee literature. Bankim Chandra was still at school or college. The model style set by Vidyasagar was in occupation of the field. Devendra Nath's style had an originality. It was different from Vidyasagar's. Yet it failed to set any model to that homely Bengali which came later through Bankim Chandra. Bakim

Chandra was Keshub's junior. Keshub had already secured for himself a unique position in the cultural life of the country, and was a recognised leader of the educated intelligentsia of Bengal, when early in the seventies Ban. im Chandra's "Banga-Darshan" appeared. Keshub had hardly any model to follow. He created a new Bengalee style not exactly colloquial yet not at the same time classical, not even of the type created by Pandit Vidyasagar. It was simple and by its very simplicity it fascinated, its audience. The secret of this fascination, however, was in the absolutely transparent unity between what Keshub felt within himself and the words which he used to express it. It was really heart talking to heart, soul communicating with the soul. By all means Keshub prepared himself, or more correctly as he would say his God equipped him for the great Ministry with which he was charged.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### EARLY YEARS IN THE BRAHMO SAMAJ.

In 1858, at the age of 19, Keshub joined the Brahmo Samaj by secretly signing its pledge. The usual practice of initiation was for the novice to be presented by some members of the congregation formally to the Minister, during the weekly Service of the Samaj. The pledge was then formally repeated by him following the Minister before the whole congregation, and then the novice signed it and become thus a member of the Samaj. Keshub did not pass through all these formalities. A printed copy of the pledge was sent to him and he signed it in his own house. The scion of the Sens of Colootola was much to valuable an acquisition to the new movement to be compelled to pass through these formalities.

Keshub was eight years old when the Brahmo Samaj was established in the house where it stands even now on Chitpore Road in Calcutta. Keshub unlike Devendra Nath never met the Raja ; neither did he come in contact with the Raja's movement in early youth. His grandfather Ram Kamal Sen is said to have been mainly responsible for Ram Mohan's exclusion from the Committee of Management of the Hindu College. Notwithstanding his intimate association with the members of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta, like Colebrooke, Wilson and others, Ram Kamal continued throughout his life to be an orthodox Hindu of the Vaishnava persuasion. In Keshub's early boyhood, he was initiated into Vaishnavic worship, and with the other boys of the family he was taught to repeat the name of Hari for his daily devotions. When he grew up and organised various



measures for his self-education and self-expression his associates among elders were prominent Christian missionaries. Bishop Cotton's domestic chaplain the Rev. P. H. Burns, the Rev. James Long of the Church Missionary Society, and Mr. Dall of the American Unitarian Mission, were all frequent visitors to the meetings of the first literary society, the British India Society, organised by Keshub. Keshab's biographer mentions the frequent theological passages at arms between Mr. Long and Mr. Dall at these meetings, which must have helped the theological education of Keshab and supported his theistic convictions, and prevented him from entering the Christian Church, even while he imbibed sincere loyalty to the character and personality of Jesus Christ. He did not however, come at this time, in contact with any of the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj. Devendra Nath was engrossed in his own propaganda through the Tattva-bodhi Sabha, that had been creating a new literature in the country. The prominent members of this Sabha were Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, Dwaraka Nath Vidyabhusan, besides Devendra Nath's personal co-workers in the Brahmo Samaj, Raj Narain Bose, Akshay Kumar Datta and others. They were ignorant of the young apostle who was growing up in the family dwelling house of the Sens of Colootola. But unknown to one another, Keshub and the leaders of the Brahmo Samaj were cultivating the same ideas and ideals. English education had naturally unsettled Keshub's mind, as it did that of the majority of his contemporaries. Keshub, however, was endowed with an original hankering after God and the spiritual life. His philosophical studies helped very materially to develop and strengthen his inborn religious and spiritual intuitions. He had already become acquainted with Theodore Parker, Miss Cobb, Emerson and other British and American Unitarian thought-leaders. In this way

he was personally finding a monotheistic faith for himself. How this faith sought outer expression has already been noticed. In one of his lectures in England Keshub related the story of his early religious evolution. "English education unsettled my mind (he said) and left a void. I had given up idolatry, but had received no positive system of faith to replace it. I had not a single friend to speak to me of religion, God and immortality. I was passing from idolatry into utter worldliness." Devendra Nath also passed through the same wilderness at the beginning of his religious and spiritual life. So miserable was he at this time that to his highly strong nerves even the sun seemed to pour blackness about him. Devendranath's experience and realisations were, however, mainly intellectual and spiritual. In Keshub this wilderness quickened a new sense of sin. "In the depth of my heart sin was realised (he said) in all its enormity and blackness. And was there no remedy? Could I continue to bear life as a burden? Heaven said, 'No. Sinner, thou hast hope! And I looked upward and there was a revelation clear to me. I felt that I have a heavenly friend always near to succour me. God Himself told me this: no book, no teacher, but God Himself in the secret recesses of my heart. God spoke to me in unmistakable language and gave me the secret of spiritual life, and that was Prayer, to which I owed my conversion.'" This prayer was Keshub's earliest friend. He grew in wisdom, purity and love with the help of this prayer. Gradually he felt the need of the communion of friends, and fellow-believers. He felt that mere belief in God was not sufficient, but he wanted a real brotherhood on earth. Where was this true church to be found?

"I did not know. Well, I established in my earlier days a small fraternity in my own house, to which I gave the somewhat singular but significant name of the Goodwill Fraternity. I did not allow myself

for one moment to harbour sectarianism, but preached to my friends these two doctrines—God our Father, every man our brother. When I felt that I wanted a church, found that the existing sects and churches would not answer my purpose. A small publication of the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj fell into my hands, and as I read the chapter on 'What Is Brahmoism?', I found that it corresponded exactly with the inner conviction of my heart, the voice of God in the soul. I at once determined that I would join the Brahmo Samaj or Indian Theistic Church."

After Keshub joined the Brahmo Samaj, it entered upon a new course of evolution. Devendra Nath received his call from a stray leaf of one of the Upanishads that was blown into his hands by a passing breeze. This Upanishad was one of the publications of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. The opening stanza of it said; "whatever changing thing is in this changing world should be covered by the Presence of the Lord, the Ruler and Director of the Universe. Covet not the riches of any one. By him alone should these be enjoyed and used who does not covet them." The first part of this text made a strong appeal to Devendra Nath who was hankering after the Unseen and hardly knew as yet how to realise Him. The second part appealed if anything with greater force to Devendra Nath who had the greatest temptation of his life on the death of his father who left very extensive properties along with an enormous debt. Some of these properties could not be legally attached by his creditors. But Devendra Nath refused to seek protection in these legal provisions, though he might have cheated his creditors of part of their dues. "Covet not the riches of others";—this text of the Upanishad had burnt itself into his soul. This was practically the central ethical note in Devendra Nath's religious and spiritual life. Devendra Nath's was an intensely conservative nature which stood in the

way of his leading any social revolt. On the death of his father Devendra Nath did not openly refuse to perform his *sradh* or after-death ritual which as the eldest son was his clear duty. The first part of this *sradh* ceremony is the consecration of various gifts for the love of the Lord and the benefit of the departed soul. There was little or nothing idolatrous in it. Devendra Nath performed this part of the ritual himself citing non-idolatrous texts after which he ran away leaving the rest of this ceremony to be performed by his younger brother Girindra Nath. This was the nature and extent of Devendra Nath's ethical protest and social revolt. The emphasis was almost exclusively on the worship of Brahman and the abjuration of the worship of images and the gods of the crowded Hindu pantheon. Along with it there was also a call to honesty in dealing with brother man. There was no call as yet for that absolute fidelity to one's own religious and social convictions, "in thought, word and deed," which soon became the main duty of the life of a Brahmo. This was in a special sense the contribution of Keshub.

Within a year of his signing the creed of the Brahmo Samaj, Keshub was called upon to stand the first trial of his new faith. The family *guru* of the Sens of Colootola paid his annual visit about this time. It was decided that the young folks of the family should receive their initiation from the *guru* on this occasion. It was the usual Vaishnavic initiation. The text of it embodied the *mantram* for the worship of Sree Krishna. Sree Krishna was regarded as one of the deities of the Hindu pantheon. The Vaishnavas worshipped him as an incarnation or *avatar* of the Lord. This was the popular view. Keshub did not believe in this popular Vaishnavic faith. He could not agree, therefore, to worship Sree Krishna and accept the Vaishnavic initiation. His youthful friends and associates tried to induce him to go through the ceremony, which, they said, had no reality

or sanctity. The *mantram* itself was a meaningless jargon. The *guru* might administer it, but they were not bound to repeat it or perform the *puja* or their daily worship as instructed by him. But Keshub could not agree to this obvious subterfuge. His ethical consciousness rebelled against this act of dishonesty. When everything was ready for the initiation ceremony and Keshub was asked to accept it, he firmly refused to do so to the inevitable consternation of the elders and the stupefaction of the whole household ; and the immediately left the house. Keshub's guardians and relations thought that he had gone to his Christian friends with a view to publicly accept their religion and be baptised by them as had happened in the case of some others. Keshub, however, went to Devendra Nath and spent the day with him. Returning home at 10 o'clock in the night he went directly to his mother and placed in her hand a pamphlet that explained the fundamental tenets of the Brahmo Samaj. In the extreme anxiety of her mind, Keshub's mother showed the pamphlet to the *guru*, who having read it told her that Keshub had accepted very high religious principle ; through the pursuit of this faith he would become a very pious man. This gave great consolation to his mother, but his family could not so easily accomodate themselves to Keshub's new faith. But Keshub stood firm in his fidelity to his convictions, and by this firmness he more or less conquered all opposition from the members of his family.

The earliest method of missionary enterprise of the Brahmo Samaj was pamphleteering. Raja Ram Mohan Roy started his propaganda by the publication of the five Upanishads with their Bengali and English translations. He followed this by publishing tracts and pamphlets from time to time some of which presented the positive side of his thought and theology, while others were written to controvert the position of his opponents. There were also one or two periodical publications

through which the Raja carried on a vigorous propaganda. When Devendra Nath came to the leadership of the movement, he also followed the same method through the Tattva-bodhini Shabha and the Tattva-bodhini Patrika, which had a good circulation in those days among the educated section of the Benga'lee community. Devendra Nath also added to this another vehicle for his propaganda, namely, the pulpit of the revived Brahmo Samaj. There was, however, as yet no public platform of the new movement. It was Keshub who first organised it. Even before joining the Brahmo Samaj he had established first the British India Society and later the Goodwill Fraternity. This last organisation was continued even after he joined Devendra Nath, who himself sometimes attended the meetings of this Fraternity. When Keshub formally joined the Brahmo Samaj, and Devendra Nath recognised the wonderful abilities of the young man, a new line of missionary work was started in the form of a Brahmo School. The plan in the beginning was that Keshub should deliver a series of English lectures on the Philosophy of Theism, and Devendra Nath should deliver a series of Bengali discourses dealing systematically with the doctrines and theology of the Brahmo Samaj. "This Brahmo School (writes Pratap Chandra Mazumdar) was an all important institution in the history of the whole Brahmo movement. It not only produced a body of intelligent doctrines and systematised the uncertain conceptions of Brahmo theism on a sound rational basis of philosophy such as modern thought throughout the world laid down to be the rudiments of all religions, but it created a nucleus of well-trained men whose sympathy, devotedness and active co-operation made all future progress in the Brahmo Samaj possible. About a dozen such men, in the prime of youth, gathered at the first meeting which took place on the 24th April, 1859 in a damp and dingy one-storied house, not far from the ancestral residence of the Sens. Nothing could exceed

the zeal, energy, faith and cheerfulness with which Keshub set about the work of organising his youthful adherents into the new school.....Keshub in his lectures delivered on every alternate Sunday poured forth a torrent of metaphysics and moral fervour; and Devendra Nath in chaste classical Bengali discoursed on the opioion and faith of the Brahmo Samaj."

In the midst of all these activities that engrossed the mind and soul of young Keshub, he was impressed by his guardians into the service of the Bank of Bengal, which with the Calcutta Mint was at that time practically regarded not only by themselves but also by the authorities of these two public institutions as a family preserve of the Sens of Colootola out of grateful regard for the memory of Ram Kamal Sen, who had been the Dewan of both these institutions. But Keshub did not continue for long in this service. Keshub's heart was not in the Bank of Bngal. It was in the Brahmo Samaj. The work of the Bank interfered with the uninterrupted pursuit of his new apostolate, and in July 1861 he tendered his resignation of his post in the Bank. "Strong remonstrances from friends and guardians, pointing out the magnitude of the sacrifice he made availed nothing. The hopes held out by the authorities of the Bank, and the regrets then expressed at his resolution did not make him waver for a moment. Keshub had made up his mind and stuck to his decision. The calling of the Brahmo Missionary as separated from all earthly callings, as renouncing every motive of gain, as depending upon Providence alone for food and raiment, was in this manner first created."

Side by side with his activities in the Brahmo School Keshub's unquenchable passion for self-expression and missionary propaganda led him to start a new Tractarian movement in Bengal. The first of these tracts was published in 1860, when Keshub was only 21. In this tract under the caption, 'Young Bengal, This is For

you' Keshub offered a challenge to the prevailing tendencies of his youthful contemporaries. "Alas, (he wrote) the moral nature is asleep; the sense of duty is dead. There is lack of moral courage, want of an active religious principle in our pseudo-patriots. Else why is that while there is, on the one hand, so much of intelligence and intellectual progress, there is, on the other hand, so little of practical work for the social advancement of the country. If patriotism had not been a mere matter of oration and essay, but a reality in practice—drunkenness and other fashionable vices would have been effectually extirpated from this land. Mutual jealousies and enmities would have gradually faded away. That unity and solidarity which is considered a great desideratum would have been established, and inspired with unquenchable enthusiasm, our countrymen would have with mind and soul, intellect as well as will, manfully endeavoured to promote their own interests and those of their country."

This was published in June (1860). Next month in July appeared the second tract under the heading "Be Prayerful." The third appeared in August on "Religion of Love." The fourth tract published in September was on the "Basis of Brahmoism." The fifth tract—October, 1860, was headed "Brethern, Love Your Father." The sixth, published in November, was on "The Signs of the Times" the central note of which was Freedom and Progress which was the message of God to the modern man. The seventh was "An exhortation" In the eighth and ninth tracts published in February and March, 1861, Keshub discussed the theory of Intuition as the foundation of faith. The next tract was a reply to the criticisms of Rev. Mr. Dyson of the fundamental tenets of the Brahmo Samaj. The eleventh tract was on "Revelation," in which Keshub refuted the claim to infallibility of the existing scriptures of the different world religions, and advanced



the doctrine of the perpetual flow of divine inspiration and the uninterrupted revelation of God's truth, love and will through the human reason, human emotions and the human will, which are when purified and cleansed of all self-conceit, self-regarding desires and self-will, used by God as instruments of His self-revelation. The twelfth and last of these tracts published in June 1861 was on "Atonement and Salvation." It was a criticism of the popular doctrine on the subject of Evangelical Christianity, and an attempt to offer a rational reconciliation between Divine Justice and Divine Love. Repentance and the determination to abjure all evil ways and absolutely resign to the guidance of the Divine Will as revealed in our inner consciousness—this is what Keshub interpreted as atonement, and this he declared was the only way to Salvation. In these twelve tracts Keshub, young as he was, really laid the foundation of the theology of the Brahmo Samaj, and though with widening experience and deepening God-consciousness came additions and amplifications of this fundamental Brahmo doctrine, Keshub to the end of his days did not abandon these early moorings of his religious and spiritual life.

In April 1861 while Keshub was still in the service of the Bank, his health broke down, and he went for a change to Krishnagar ; and here he utilised this opportunity for delivering four lectures on the religion of the Brahmo Samaj. This was the first platform propaganda of the new movement. These lectures created a great stir not only in the educated community of Krishnagar but all over Bengal. These provoked a historic controversy with the representatives of popular Christianity. Rev. Dyson of the Church missionary Society was Keshub's protagonist in this controversy. It was he who tried to ridicule the Brahmo doctrine of Intuition by saying that the religion of the Brahmo Samaj was nothing more or less than a conjugation of the verb

‘to think ! ‘I think, we think, thou thinkest, you think, he thinks, they think”—this was Mr. Dyson’s travesty of the Brahmo doctrine of Intuition.

The Brahmo School, was soon supplemented by another institution which helped more than any other to build up the Brahmo community and the early Brahmo character, which owed its inception entirely to Keshub. The Brahmo School brought together a number of enthusiastic young men, most of them were students of the different Calcutta colleges, some of whom were the very flower of the University, who took a high place at its different examinations. Theological and philosophical lectures delivered by Keshub at the Brahmo School attracted them. Keshub’s magnetic personality drew them to him even more strongly than his philosophical discourses. The weekly contact with these bright and fervent young men was not considered enough by Keshub for the purpose of his new propaganda among them. They themselves were not satisfied by meeting the young apostle in the class room once or twice a week. They hungered and thirsted after closer intimate relation with him. This brought into being a new organisation in the Brahmo Samaj. It was first named Fraternal Union or *Bhatres-Sammilanee*. This was, however, soon changed into Sangat-Sabha. This name was given by Maharshi Devendra Nath himself, who borrowed it from the Shikhs whose devotional gatherings were called Sangats. This Sangat Sabha, particularly the one over which Keshub himself presided and which was held daily in Keshub’s own family dwelling house at Colootola, exercised profound influence over the lives and characters of the youthful members of the Brahmo Samaj. It was a nursery of the new missionary group that gradually gathered around the personality of Keshub. These conferences were confined to the discussion of theological subjects only. Whatever concerned the life and thought of the young members became the subject of delibera-

tions of the whole group. Every difficulty, whether intellectual or moral, was freely placed before Keshub and this youthful fraternity by its members, and the decisions of the body practically voiced by Keshub himself and supported by arguments and appeals that never failed to carry convictions, became the rule of conduct of these young Brahmos. It was from this Sangat that the first generation of Brahmos associated with Keshub received their moral and social inspiration. At the first annual meeting of the Sangat over which Maharshi Devendra Nath was invited to preside, Keshub in presenting a record of the year's work, mentioned the debate on affecting the Brahminical thread, which was condemned by the Sangat as a sign and symbol of idolatry and priestcraft. Maharshi Devendra Nath was so impressed by the report of this proceeding that when Keshub was speaking on them he looked at his own sacred thread and saying—"Why then should it be here?"—openly threw it away. The Maharshi, however, took his sacred thread back, not as a sign of caste or priesthood but only as a mark of the line of ancestors from whom he sprang. But the advanced section of the Brahmos led by Keshub could not accept this view. They repudiated the Brahminical thread as part of the idolatrous religion and caste system of the Hindus. And it was really upon this question of idolatry and caste that the first schism of the Brahmo Samaj broke out a few years later, creating the inevitable breach between Maharshi Devendra Nath and his conservative Hindu following on the one side, and Keshub and his progressive Brahmo brethren, on the other. These differences had, however, not come out as yet to the open. The relation between Keshub and Devendra Nath was still exceedingly intimate and affectionate. Devendra Nath looking upon Keshub with almost a father's affection and regarding him as one would make the Brahmo Samaj a great force not only in the religious and spiritual

life of modern India, but also of the whole of the modern world.

Keshub's work in the Brahmo School and his missionary lectures at Krishnagar as well as his propaganda through the Goodwill Fraternity proved to Devendra Nath the presence of the spirit of God in the mind and soul of this young man, and induced him to ordain Keshub as a Minister of the Brahmo Samaj. Devendra Nath had hitherto been the only Minister of the Samaj. There were others in the new Ministry who shared with him the work of the Brahmo pulpit, but they were all styled "Upacharyas" or Assistant Ministers. Devendra Nath wanted to give to young Keshub a higher and a more distinguished position in the Ministry of the Brahmo Samaj, and decided, therefore, to formally instal him into this sacred office. On the first day of the Bengali year, 1784 B. S., corresponding to the 13th of April, 1862, Keshub was formally and publicly installed as Acharya (Minister) of the Brahmo Samaj. "Such an installation", writes Keshub's biographer, "had never been held before, and such a dignity never was conferred." "The ordination ceremony took place in the great court-yard of the Tagores. A long service was held, at the end of which Keshub was presented with a sort of diploma framed in gold, in which his main duties as Minister were set forth in beautiful language, the document being signed by Devendra Nath Tagore himself. He was also presented with a brightly emblazoned velvet-lined casket containing an ivory-seal and the Brahmo Dharma granth (book)—these being as it were the insignia of his office. The title "Brahmananda" (Rejoicer in God) was also conferred upon him."

The ordination ceremony, however, brought on a crisis in the life of Keshub, and opened a new chapter in the history of the Brahmo Samaj. Keshub felt it his duty to take his young wife to this ceremony. The elders of his family strongly resented this desire of their

young relation. They had from the very beginning strongly disliked the growing intimacy of Keshub with Devendra Nath and his family, who though nominally Brahmins were practically looked upon by orthodox Hindus as beyond the pale of Brahminical Hinduism. They had come to know of Keshub's intention to take his wife to Devendra Nath's wife to witness his ordination ceremony. Early on the morning of Sunday, the 13th, April, at about 5 o'clock the "inner courtyard of the large family house of the Sens presented a lively spectacle. To quote from Pratap Chandra Mazumdar's vivid pen-picture of the incident: All the elder brothers, adult cousins, uncles, great-uncles, who swarmed in the ancestral habitation, had left their beds long before sunrise. Servants and up-country gatekeepers were posted at strategical points, and openings for the enemy's egress, the bigger outer gates were bolted, barred, locked and guarded by the stoutest family retainers. Keshub followed by his timid youthful wife (she could not be more than fifteen at the time), her *sari* hanging in a long veil before her bashful face, came out of his own room, and with suppressed excitement walked past the marshalled groups of angry relatives. They had imagined that their presence and hostile demonstration would awe him. But nothing of the sort happened. No word was exchanged, no violence was shown, the shock of his audacity struck them with mute horror; they had never seen, never expected such a thing. But when the brave couple reached the outermost gate, the turbanned ruffians who had been set as guard stood up, and positively refused to let them out. Keshub was not unprepared for this insolence. He simply advanced a step, and with calm dignity commanded them to 'withdraw that bolt and unlock the gate.' He had that on his face which on great emergencies compelled immediate obedience. The bolt was withdrawn, the gate was unlocked and with his faithful

wife by his side the young hero stood emancipated in the free light and air of the public street. The big family prison, the arrayed relatives were all left behind, as it happened for a much longer time than he anticipated at the time. He hired a *palki* at once, and off he went to the hospitable house of Devendra Nath Tagore."

*N.B.*—Some other speeches and articles of Mr. Pal in English and Bengalee have been reproduced in this volume. Those will serve as supplementary to this article, which unfortunately was left unfinished owing to the failing of health and old age of Mr. Pal.

*Compiler.*

## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN ANNIVERSARY.

MR. B. C. PAL'S ADDRESS.

(12th January, 1902.)

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Patriotism, like religion, needs adequate symbols and sacraments for its growth and realisation. The games of ancient Greece ; the *fetes* of modern France ; institutions like the Decoration Day, or the birthday celebrations of Washington, Lincoln, and other makers of American history, in the United States ; St. Paul's Cathedral, the Nelson Column, or the National Portrait Gallery in England ;—are the symbols and sacraments of the cult of patriotism in those countries. It is these institutions and monuments that feed the patriotic sentiment of their respective peoples. And we in India also need similar symbols and sacraments for the consolidation of our national life, and the organisation of the civic sentiment among us.

It is in this view that we value the anniversary celebrations that have, of late, been coming into vogue among us, in honour of our departed great ones ; and it is for this reason that we deeply regret that the day when Keshub Chunder Sen died, eighteen years ago,—the 8th of January—was not duly observed by the public of Calcutta this year. It is the more to be regretted, because a beginning had, at one time, been made,—and one or two crowded and thoroughly representative meetings had been held in previous years in celebration of his death-anniversary.

The responsibility of this, however, rests with the immediate followers of Keshub Chunder Sen themselves.

The way in which, for the last few years, a section (1) of his own Church have been trying to present him to the public, setting up all sorts of fanciful and supernatural claims for him, has, we are afraid, considerably cooled down the ardour of the public with regard to the late Brahmo leader. and many people, in view of these foolish claims, now fight shy, perhaps, of these celebrations. Indeed, the great misfortune of Keshub Chunder Sen, like that of many other great men in the world's

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(1) There is, however, not so much justification for such a charge. Such a section, if ever grew, must have been microscopic in volume and was short-lived. At present, at any rate, there is none who would answer to such description. The cause, however, for this stagnation is to be sought elsewhere—The internal dissensions amongst Keshab's immediate associates following his death, the unfortunate circumstances which followed and which made it impossible for Rev. P. C. Mazumdar to continue to serve his dearest Church in co-operation with his colleagues, coupled with the latter-day disappearance of the religious and moral fervour and fire kindled by Keshub and the consequent neglect to continue the Sadhans (religious exercises) and practices initiated by him, the victory of worldliness, selfishness, narrowness, insincerity and other iniquities over sincerity, truthfulness, honesty prayerfulness and broadness of heart in the Brahmo Samaj, as in many other Samajes and institutions of the present day—all these proved a set-back to the cause of Navavidhan and brought about a morbid condition and a lethargic atmosphere in the Samaj.

The ideal of the Navavidhan was too high and too deep to be appreciated and understood to the full extent even by the immediate followers of Keshub, and they failed to carry out the injunctions of this Dispensation in right earnest. Keshub himself, felt it and in giving expression to it said more than once that it may take a very long time, nay, several centuries to understand properly the message and the inner significance of Navavidhan.



history, has been that his most intimate friends and followers have failed most grievously to seize the central point of his work and message, and instead of helping, have foolishly hindered all rational attempts towards a right valuation of his life and work.

But when one rises above the exaggerations of his foolish friends, and the detractions of his equally foolish enemies, and tries to form a critical estimate of his work and worth, one is compelled to admit that some of his contributions to the life and thought of modern India are of lasting value, and will always secure for him a place of high honour among the makers of our national life. On some points, in his earlier days, he fell off no doubt from the lines of Raja Ram Mohun Roy, but, on other points, it will have to be admitted, he largely supplemented and even corrected the great Raja himself. For instance, in his earlier days Keshub Chunder Sen by his leanings towards Scotch intuitionism, and the attempt to organise the Brahmo Samaj on extra national lines, after the model of an abstract cosmopolitanism, derailed the movement of the Raja ; but, in his New Dispensation, with its ideals of the Concrete Universal and its conceptions of *lila*, he largely supplemented, and even corrected the movement of Raja Ram Mohun Roy.

But even the violent, and, to some extent, irrational, individualism preached by Keshub Chunder Sen in his earlier and somewhat rationalistic days, fulfilled a beneficent purpose in modern Indian life. It set in motion the dynamic elements of society. It raised a distinct ethical note in Hindu society, which had never been so pronounced there before. The process of evolution is always from thesis, through antithesis, to synthesis — from dogmatism, through the purifying process of scepticism, to higher critical judgment. And if to day we have been led to a higher plane of synthetic and critical judgment, which recognises, and is able to correct, the

mistakes of the violent revolt of individualism led in his earlier days against the dogmatic authority of caste, custom, and scriptural injunction,—by Keshub Chunder Sen, we cannot forget that, that revolt has been an essential moment in our intellectual and spiritual evolution. Individualism is only half a-truth; and it is realising its own limitations to-day. Keshub Chunder Sen himself recognised these, as his subsequent attempts to overcome them, first by the doctrine of "Inspiration," and secondly by the grotesque institution of his Sree Darbar, conclusively prove. Nor can it be denied that to Keshub Chunder Sen, more than to any other man, modern Bengal owes its present higher moral tone.

The most valuable contribution of Keshub Chunder Sen to his age and race, however, was his conception of the religious unity of the human race. This unity had been preached before him, no doubt, both in India, by Raja Ram Mohun Roy, and outside India, by one or two European philosophers. But this unity had been arrived at, in the previous attempts by what may be called the method of subtraction, by reducing all religions, so to say, to their least common measure, which, therefore, left out of account all the higher and specific developments of the religious consciousness of humanity. Keshub Chunder Sen, with rare and marvellous insight, saw the fundamental error of this method; and boldly declared the essential unity of religions, not at their lowest and simplest, but in the highest and most complex stages of their growth; and interpreted their differentiations as those of different types of the same religious consciousness of the race. This is his greatest and most fruitful discovery in the domain of the Science of Religion. The view that he took, namely, that of a linear process of evolution not only in logical, but also in strict chronological order, is no doubt erroneous; (1) which seems, indeed

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(1) Read carefully Keshab's utterances on this point, and everything will be clear.

curious in one who appears to have stumbled upon the real truth about this matter in his apprehension of the fact that the three stages of evolution—subjective, objective, and universal (which he called Puaranic)—are common to the whole race. But this error in detail does not lessen in any way the value of the central discovery ; and when we have a real Science of Religion in the not distant future, the value of this discovery of Keshub Chunder Sen will be fully realised and appreciated.

Keshub Chunder Sen was not a philosopher. Neither was he a very systematic thinker. He was a preacher, *the greatest preacher, indeed, of the last century*. He was a *prophet*, intensely burnt up, all his life' with true prophetic fervour. His was a marvellous religious genius ; and he gained many truths by the sheer force of his religious intuitions, which philosophy finds out through its more circumspect and scientific methods. Like his intuition of the unity of religions, that of the harmony of the scriptures and the prophets of humanity is also among his most valuable contributions to the religious thought of our age. The Science of Religion will, no doubt, have to demonstrate these truths, through the help of the historico-comparative methods ; and when so established, they will be found to mean much more than what Keshub Chunder Sen understood or meant by them. But this demonstration will not take away from, but rather add to the value of the enunciation of the great and pregnant truth which he presented to his age. 1)

But the most significant contribution of Keshub

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(1) Keshub, himself, has said that fuller religion will come in future. Read his Bengali Sermon "Purna Dharma Vabishate"

(পূর্ণধর্ম ভবিষ্যতে)

( Acharye. Upadesh Vol. IX p 240—April, 2 , 1879 )

Chunder Sen is his last one—his message of YOGA and LILA—his teachings on the threefold communion with God, through Nature, through Self, and through History or Humanity. which, with their necessary corollaries and implications, will remain as a permanent heritage to mankind.

History will correct the errors of Keshub Chunder Sen, as it has corrected those of so many other seers and sages of our race. It will reject whatever has been crude and wedded to unreason or untruth, in his life and thought. But it will, all the same preserve his name as one of the greatest men of the nineteenth century. And India is not over-rich in such great men that she can with impunity treat the sacred memory of Keshub Chunder Sen with neglect. It would be a sin, indeed, to allow the character of such a man to lose its fullest hold upon the future generations of the country.

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MR. B. C. PAL'S ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS  
ON KESHUB.

*(8th January, 1893)*

THE GREATEST HINDU REFORMER OF THE AGE

Is this Keshub Chunder dead? Can this Keshub Chunder die? Master and Minister, art thou really dead? Is thy musical and inspired voice that poured light and life into our dark dying souls hushed for ever? No. A hundred institutions without and a hundred inspirations within cry out with one voice that Keshub Chunder Sen still lives, lives in the life of his Church, disunited and dispersed though it be—lives in the larger life of the Brahmo Somaj—faint and feeble though it be, and lives in the still larger life of the social, moral and religious movements of educated India, guided by men of whatever class, and called by whatever name they be. No, gentlemen, these great men, these epoch-making spirits, these prophetic geniuses, these that apprehend new truths, and start fresh ideals of life, and Keshub Chunder was undoubtedly one of them, they never die. . . . .

Do thou come forth, then, Master and Minister, come here this afternoon, to receive our homage and our love, to teach us ever far more effectually than ever couldst do in the flesh the great truths which thou didst receive from thy God,—and by the grace of the Heavenly Father on whose bosom thou art reclining now, help us to finish the grand fabric which thou wert moved to seek to raise in this land to the glory of thy God and the lasting benefit of thy fellow-men.

And, gentlemen, the Keshub Chunder Sen who stands before us to-day is above all a Hindu—a Hindu

of Hindus. . . . .  
 . . . *Namam* is, in the first place, the emblem of purity. And *has not purity*,—purity of the flesh and of the spirit—has it not always *been the most striking feature of the life of Keshub Chunder Sen*? Cleanse me from self and sin—has not that been the one undying burden of his life-long prayer? Behold, then, the fragrant sandal mark of purity on the broad forehead of Keshub Chunder Sen.

It signifies—this *Namam*,—in the next place, that the wearer of it has, before doing anything else, worshipped his God in a pure body and a clean spirit. It is the emblem of divine worship. Worship, no doubt, is the common heritage of all nations—it has been enjoined by all religions: but the Hindu is, perhaps, the most worshipful animal on the face of the globe. . . . .  
 . . . . . The *Namam* is then the emblem of this unceasing spirit of devotion. And has not unceasing devotion been another principal feature in the life and character of Keshub Chunder Sen? Behold, then, the deepsandal marks of worship on the forehead of Brahmnananda Keshub Chunder Sen. . . . ,

The sanctity of human life is acknowledged by every civilised community, but it is the Hindu alone, I believe, who has recognised the sacredness of all life . . . And had not Keshub Chunder Sen, even as a boy, put on this beautiful Hindu *Namam* of love for all creatures on his tender forehead? Did he not adopt a vegetarian diet at the tender age of fourteen, and did he not live and die a vegetarian? Behold, then, the broad sandal mark of love, love for men and beast, on the forehead of the Minister of the Brahmo Somaj.

From love of this kind to world-embracing charity, it is but a short and easy step. This all-embracing regard for the animal world, this kind sympathy with all sorts of physical life, necessarily lead to an equally wide sympathy with and regard for all kinds of moral

and spiritual ideals. . . . It is the Hindu alone, I believe, who of all the civilized peoples of the earth, never suffered himself to be under the influence of that bane of the religious world, namely, religious intolerance, never dealt out damnation to other people. To him all religion is sacred, all systems God's, all help equally the salvation of those that sincerely follow them. . . . . And was not this catholicity, this absolutely unsectarian spirit, the most marked feature in the religious life of Keshub Chunder Sen? Behold, then, the wide sandal mark of *the broadest and the noblest catholicity on the forehead of the great leader of the New Dispensation.*

Gentlemen, I have called Keshub Chunder Sen a Hindu reformer, not only because he was as we have just seen, a Hindu of Hindus in his life and character, but because I believe that the ideal of religious life that he sought to set up,—the ideal of spiritual culture that he pursued and preached specially during the later and more mature period of his life, was pre-eminently a Hindu ideal. *Raja Rammohan Roy did not organise any sect or society, he did not establish any church,* he merely set up a place of divine worship, and he was not wrong in calling this new place of divine worship by a new name. Brahmoism is Hinduism,—the spiritual and reflective Hinduism of the seers and the sages, changed to suit the altered circumstances of the times. (1) The New Dispensation is only Hinduism reformed by the light of the modern ideas to suit present needs. Raja Rammohan Roy laid the foundation of the edifice. Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore and Babu Akshya Kumar Dutt constructed its plinth, while it was left to the towering genius of Keshub Chunder Sen to raise the beautiful superstructure of the grand and all-glorious fabric, which, when com-

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(1) Keshub in his sermon Jatiya-Vidhan (National Dispensation) says that a Brahmo of the New Dispensation is a Hindu in the truest sense of the word.

pleted, will, while being Hindu in its origin, Hindu in its inception and its designs, yet *enfold within itself all nations and all religions*—will be the great hall of the religious parliament of men, *the great meeting place of the spiritual federation of the world, which will unite and harmonie all systems, set all bigotry and religious hatred at rest and settle all theological disputes for good.* May you and your work prosper and glorify our common Father. They are a large and varied class, these Hindu reformers, Sir, of the present age, and in my humble judgment Keshub Chunder Sen occupies the foremost place among them all. He is the leader of modern Hindu thought, the leader not only of what his immediate disciples call the New Dispensation—the leader not only of what you call the Brahmo Somaj, but of Hindu reform generally of the present age.

The greatest accusation against Keshub Chunder Sen has been his reverence for Christ and his Christian proclivities. But considering the inner spirit of the Hindu system is there any thing Un-Hindu, anything revolutionary, anything that is not in perfect harmony with the past history and traditions of our people—or of the Hindu religion in the installation of Christ and St. Paul by the side of Buddha and Chaitanya? The religion of the Hindus, as I have already told you, gentlemen, is not an unit like Christianity or Mahomedanism, but a collection of units, not an autocracy but an Imperial Federation of many religions and many prophets under the immediate rule of Providence. But so long this federation though large was still not complete, Christ had not joined it. Mahomet had not joined it. Confucius and Zoroaster had not joined it. The Federation awaited further expansion, larger developments. And Keshub Chunder Sen has sought to do this. *In the New Hinduism of Keshub Chunder Sen you will find all the great religions of the*



*world and all the small religions also brought together and harmonised.* The harmony of the gospels, the federation of the prophets, these are the most striking and apparently the most outlandish feature in the religious ideal left by Keshub Chunder Sen. But judged soberly and critically what is it but a reform of the Hindu system—a reform of the old, the decentralised, the federal and the ever-expansive Hinduism, by the light of modern ideas and recent experiences? No, gentlemen, Keshub Chunder Sen has not destroyed, but only completed the old religion of our people.

Thick clouds of ceremonial smoke and incense so overshadowed the soul of the Hindu nation that they gradually lost sight of their ancient God. The higher life of the Hindu had always been a life of unceasing inspiration, a life of direct God-vision, and when God hid himself behind clouds of smoke and incense, the real life of the Hindu left him. Ah, who would restore to the Hindu his previous sight? Who would bring his God back to him? Who would rend the thick veil of dead ceremonials and meaningless symbolism, and illumine the soul of the Hindu once more with direct God-vision? Who, oh, who would open afresh the ancient currents of divine inspiration? He would, indeed, be the greatest benefactor of the Hindu race; and if he be a Hindu, who would not assign to such a one the highest place among the Hindu reformers of modern India?

And did not Keshub Chunder Sen seek to do all this? Did he not seek to restore to us our ancient God? Did he not struggle to rend the thick veil of caste and custom that hid us from Him? Did he not live and die to dig open the ancient founts of divine inspiration for his dear and dying people? Was it not the deep spiritual desolation in which he found his fatherland and evoked his earliest religious and missionary activities? And since then was there a single day of his life which he

did not devote to work, thought or worship for our moral and spiritual advancement ?

As Keshub Chunder Sen himself says in *his autobiography—which is one of the sweetest and most original little book I have ever read in the Bengali language*—his religious ideal in those days was to be virtuous and moral, and serve God through good and philanthropic works . . . . . From the Hebrew prophet he caught the fierce fire of righteousness, from the New Testament, from his dear Jesus, he imbibed the spirit of humanity, and from St. Paul he received his missionary zeal. And when we consider, gentlemen, the early surroundings of Keshub Chunder Sen, when we consider our state of society in Bengal in those days, we cannot fail to see how very needful it was for the great Hindu reformer of this age to pass through this absolutely Hebrew and Christian training. The most rigid morality was needed in those days to clarify Hindu society. The most violent and uncompromising iconoclasm was needed to free the spirit of Hindu religion from the dark and dead ceremonials that had gathered themselves around it. A baptism by fire was needed to bring out the lost sheen of the religion of our forefathers, And under the guidance of Providence Keshub Chunder Sen did administer this baptism to the dying and drooping Hinduism of his early days, and thus free it from the hard shells that had encrusted it . . . . . But Keshub Chunder's was an ever restless, and ever expansive soul. *If there be such a thing as earth-hunger in the spiritual world, Keshub Chunder had it largely. Having assimilated Moses and Christ and St. Paul, his spirit hungered for fresh fields and pastures new, and by and by he caught hold of Chaitanya.* Moses and the Hebrew prophets had lent the infant Brahmo Somaj their rigid righteousness. Christ had given it his wide humanity, St. Paul his untiring spirit of work, the charming prophet of Nadia now came to soften and

sweeten all these by bathing them in the sweet and delicious waters of *Bhakti*. Chaitanya had, in the flesh, made a Hindu of the Mahomedan Haridas, his spirit now made a Hindu of the Judaised and Christianised Brahmo Samaj. The boy had been sent to School to foreign lands—to Moses, to Christ, and to Paul and there he was necessarily under the severest restraints; he was quiet, he was well-behaved, he was all that a civilised child of this fag-end of the nineteenth century ought to be. But when Chaitanya brought him back home to his natural parents, he became at once free and frolicsome, began to laugh, to dance, to sing wild with joy. This is the Hindu Keshub Chunder Sen as we find him in his latter days.....and thenceforward the Brahmo Samaj movement took a new and unexpected turn,—it became an absolutely Hindu movement in its inner spirit as well as in its outer form—that wing of the Brahmo Samaj, I mean, which had Keshub Chunder Sen for its leader.

And the first, cry of the Hindu Keshub Chunder was for his sight. "Where, Oh where is my old, my hereditary sight? Oh Chaitanya, Oh Buddha, ye holy visionaries of Hindustan, who will make me a gift of a pair of eyes? Who will open my vision so that I may see the Divine Mother, who is making me so wild with joy from behind the veil? Oh blessed Chaitanya thou didst enter the vast and blue expanse of the sea in search of thy dear *Hari*—didst thou find Him there? Where shall I see Him?" This was the very first cry of the maddened spirit of the reformed Hindu Reformer. He had prayed, and his prayers, as he says, had almost invariably been heard and responded to. He had worshipped and had reaped amply the fruits of it in his life and character. He had even heard the speechless voice of God, by the ear of his conscience. But this God, though always present and near, had still been an invisible, an intangible reality. He was still

behind the veil. But as his relations with this invisible God became, with new spiritual experiences, more and more intimate and sweet, through the influence of the deep emotional culture of the ideal of Chaitanya, Keshub's thirst for vision grew more and more. He panted to see his God, to see Him always and everywhere, and gradually his vision opened. He saw God, felt His presence vividly and clearly in the elemental life of the cosmos, in the spiritual life of the ego, and in the varied drama of human history and human life. It was no myth, no life, no mere rhetoric, no play of the fancy—the experience which Keshub Chunder Sen described in his immortal lecture on “*God-vision in the Nineteenth Century*.” It was—this God-vision of Keshub Chunder Sen—a living truth—a stern reality.....And this God-vision,—this vivid realisation of the over-soul of his own soul, and in the external world as the One energy and love that shape and move the whole universe at once, changed the aspect of the whole world, in the eyes of Keshub Chunder Sen. There is the spirit of God, the same as it moves and guides, leads and controls me—moving, shaping, guiding and controlling the whole, whole world of spirit and matter—evolving systems, guiding prophets, and leading the destinies of nations,—this pantheistic theism—this idealistic realism,—gave a new meaning to everything in the internal vision of Keshub Chunder .....all religions were from God, were in God and also all prophets. Christ, Chaitanya, Buddha, Mahomet, Moses and Confucius—all formed one sacred brotherhood, and the lives and ideals of all these formed a place in the spiritual culture of Keshub Chunder Sen. The *mechanical* eclecticism of the old Brahmo Somaj became now a *chemical* process in its later development in the new Hinduism of Keshub Chunder Sen. And not only all prophets but all gods and goddesses were also now united and harmonised, and given their

real and rational meaning. The analysis of old Brahmoism had dissolved all gods and goddesses, and had sought to discover their last, their final irreducible substance—in Brahma, the one Infinite and Eternal Deity. The synthesis of the new Brahmoism joined them all back as parts of the One undivided and indivisible God. *Rejoice, ye Hindus ; for Keshub Chunder Sen has called back your 330 millions of gods and goddesses into life by uniting them with the living God*, by proving them to be not separate entities and distinct powers—but mere symbols manifesting the powers and properties of the One undivided and indivisible God—his Brahma.

The iconoclasm of the old Brahmoism had destroyed and very rightly destroyed the lifeless ceremonials and symbolism of popular Hinduism. But when the spirit of new Brahmoism began to grow and expand, when new emotions began to stir the very depths of the soul, and shake the whole being as an aspen leaf by the velocity of their sacred and maddening currents, the inner soul naturally sought expression in outer symbols, the internal emotions sought formulation in external ceremonials ; and in this the new Hinduism of Keshub Chunder Sen found a living explanation of ceremonialism and symbolism, By exhibiting the processes by which they had grown he laid bare the inner essence and truth of these popular usages and institutions and indicated the way in which the lower Hinduism of the masses could be truly revived and reformed. What more can the most conservative Hindu reformer want ? .....No, gentlemen, look from whatever standpoint you please, examine him in any way you like. Keshub Chunder Sen will come out victorious from every test and you cannot, in any way, escape the conclusion that *he was the greatest Hindu Reformer of your age.*

And, gentlemen, if Keshub Chunder Sen be, as I believe is, the greatest of our modern Hindu

reformers, it follows as a necessary corollary that his reform movements includes and transcends all the other Hindu reform movements of the day. You are seeking to establish the truths of *Vedas*—the Brahmo Somaj has already forestalled you here, it has already in its own life proved the central truth of the *Vedas*—the one truth around which all the *Vedas* hang—the truth, namely, of God-vision in Nature. You are striving to convince an unbelieving world of the truth of the *Vedanta*—the movement of Keshub Chunder Sen has already declared, from present knowledge, God-vision in the spirit to be absolutely true. You are trying to revive the truth of the *Puranas*—here too the new Hindu movement of Keshub Chunder Sen has already taken possession of the field by proving the working of an ever-active and ever present God in human affairs, and *by declaring that the dearest and the nearest manifestations of God is in the life and character of his children, in the character of ordinary men generally, in that of great men and prophetic geniuses particularly.....* English bayonets and European science have conquered us in the past, Hindu *Bhakti* and Hindu *Yoga* will conquer England and the West in the future.....and *the day will come sooner or later, when the religious federation of the world will meet under the Hindu flag, and when by the mercy of God that day dawns upon the world, the name of Keshub Chunder Sen will not be forgotten, and on that day the spirit of Keshub Chunder Sen will feel that his earthly life and labours have not been in vain.* (The italics are ours.)

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## MR. B. C. PAL'S LATEST ADDRESS

BHARATVARSHIYA BRAHMA MANDIR

August 22, 1928

Looking back to the history of the Brahmo movement of the last hundred years, Mr. Bipin Chandra Pal said that this history could be divided into three epochs, namely;—

- (i) that of Raja Ram Mohan Roy.
- (ii) that of Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, and
- (iii) that of Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen.

*The Raja's message was the message of the Unity of the Godhead.* Though Hindu thought and theology from the earliest Vedic times had repeatedly proclaimed the unity of the Godhead, the popular Hinduism of a hundred years ago had practically forgotten that ancient truth..... Or more correctly speaking, re-delivered the message of "One God without a Second," the Author and Governor of the Universe, and inculcated His spiritual worship.

### DEVENDRA NATH TAGORE

Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore brought to the Brahmo Somaj a deeper and more intimate God-consciousness..... He therefore sought the perpetual companionship of his God as Friend and Lover. The message of Devendra Nath was the message of a Personal God, calling for the cultivation of a more personal relationship with Him by his devotees. *The message of Devendra Nath was really the message of a new Hindu Theism*

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## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN

The special contribution of Keshub Chunder Sen falls into three sections. His first message was the message of what may be called the Christian conscience. Keshub was the first teacher who, like John the Baptist, cried out "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

His next contribution was that of exuberant love of God or *Bhakti* of Hindu Vaishnavism, particularly of the School of Sri Chaitanya. His third contribution was the building up of a concrete universal religion. The Raja had called us to the contemplation of the Supreme Truth, which is common to all the religions. But the Universal universally reveals and realises itself through particulars. Universal religion abstracted from the particularities of particular religions, is mere dead bones without living flesh and blood. Universal religion is not a religion like Judaism or Christianity or Islam or Buddhism, but it is the logic or implication of every particular religion from the most primitive to the most complex. Every religion moves progressively towards this universal ideal.....To the votary of universal religion Keshub declared. therefore, all scriptures are sacred; all disciplines are sacred; all the prophets and seers and saints of every system are messengers of God and a revelation of God's Life and Love. *This was Keshub's special contribution not only to the theology and devotions of the Brahmo Somaj but also to modern world religions.* On the top of all these came to Keshub a new revelation, namely, the revelation of God in man.

## UNIVERSAL YOGA

Keshub summed up and delivered the teachings of his life-time, the ripened fruit of his life's spiritual strivings and realisations from his death-bed, in his immortal brochure "Yoga: Objective, Subjective and



Universal." Here he indicated the three ways along which the modern man must seek and find his God. God stands revealed in Nature. To seek and find Him in natural objects and phenomena is Yoga Objective. To seek and find Him in the movement of our own inner consciousness as the everawake witness of all our thoughts and emotions, and inner impulses, the director of all our senses and the root and realisation of all our affections and aspirations—this is Yoga Subjective. To seek and find Him, Who moves in nature energising every atom of matter, directing and controlling every force behind natural phenomena and Who is the Indweller in every individual human, as the Universal Providence of History—this is Yoga Universal. Here in this Vision of the Universal, the God of Nature and the God of Man's inner consciousness revealed as the Personal God, is shaping and directing the whole creation to its ultimate end, for the fulfilment of His own eternal purpose.

Mr. B. C. Pal emphatically said that the Rajah did not offer any religion or religious doctrines or disciplines or formularies but simply theology and philosophy based on human intellect and comparative study of the world's three main scriptures—Islamic, Christian and Hindu with a view to establish the "Least Common Measure" of God-head, *i.e.*, the Unity of God-head. According to the speaker the Rajah's private and personal *sadhan* was more of a *tantric* character than anything else. Mr. Pal while enumerating the unique contributions of Keshub in the realm of religion, discipline, formularies, communion of saints, exuberance of devotion (*Bhakti*) said that in the New Dispensation the religion of the Brahmo Somaj found a better and fuller expression.—  
*"Navavidhan,"* September, 6, 1928.

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KESHUB BIRTH-DAY ADDRESS  
(*delivered on 19, November, 1898.*)

At the Keshub Academy

By

PT. SITANATH DUTT (TATTWA BHUSHAN),  
OF THE SADHARAN BRAHMO SAMAJ

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KESHUB CHANDRA SEN  
THE APOSTLE OF HINDU THEISM

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There seems to be a singular incompatibility between the subject and the appointed speaker of the present meeting. One who, apart from his occasional speeches denomination meetings, is not a public speaker at all, has undertaken to lecture on one, who, besides his other excellences, was one of the most eminent orators of his time. But, gentlemen, I think you will agree with me when I say that there are things which one must do at the right time, however, ill-prepared he may be for doing them. Such a thing is, according to Hindu ideas, at any rate, the *sraddha* ceremony of one's parents or other very near relatives. On an occasion like that, you cannot plead inadequacy of preparation as an excuse for either the non-performance or postponement of the sacred rite. You must perform it, and that at the day fixed by Scriptures and traditions, and must not mind even if you are ill-spoken of for the unsatisfactoriness of your preparations. The present seems to be an occasion

like that. Though not in name and form, yet in spirit, it is a *sraddha* ceremony that I am going to perform and to which I have invited you as witnesses. To-day is Keshub Chandra Sen's birthday, and not the day of his death. In name, therefore, it is not his *sraddha* day ; and so far as form is concerned, we the followers of Keshub Chandra Sen, have discarded the material appendages of the ordinary *sraddha* ceremony as inconsistent with our view of the spirituality of the other world. But Keshub Chandra is no more with us, and we are not allowed to have those rejoicings naturally connected with a birth-day observance which would take place if the departed one were with us. His birth-day and the day of his ascension have become the same with us ; we celebrate both by meditating on and discussing, with whatever devoutness we can command, his extraordinarily pure, pious and useful life, and his noble, saving utterances. It was this which led me to say that though not in name and form, yet in spirit, it is a *sraddha* ceremony that we are going to perform, a ceremony having for its object the expression of our *sraddha* or respect for the sacred memory of the departed teacher by devout meditations on his life and work in general, or some particular aspect of his teachings. That this is a duty we cannot put off, is also clear. This school bears the honoured name of Keshub Chandra Sen. It is a memorial, a very humble memorial no doubt, of the great reformer, raised by a loving and beloved disciple, and now maintained by a deeply admiring follower. My humble self is at the head of its teaching staff, and must see that the institution remains true to its name and keeps up its best traditions, and even, if possible, becomes more and more deserving of the great name it bears. I need hardly say, however, that so far as the present duty, at any rate, is concerned, that of addressing, and if possible, enlightning you a little on Mr. Sen's life-work, I feel my inability very deeply, and would not have

undertaken the task if it could be put off. But it cannot be put off. The relations, not only of the school, but of my own humble self, with the great soul we have met to honour, are most intimate. Notwithstanding minor differences on some doctrinal and practical points, I profess to be a humble follower of Keshub Chandra Sen. He is my spiritual father. His spiritual blood,—the noble thoughts he inspired, the lofty ideals he preached and pursued, the subtle, unspeakable emotions that he aroused in the inmost recess of the soul,—run through my inner organism, and make my ethical and spiritual life, however humble it may be, possible. I feel, therefore, that it is my duty, both as an officer of this school, and as individually tracing my spiritual lineage to Keshub Chandra Sen, to pay a tribute to his memory today in the manner arranged, without minding the poverty of my preparation.

I purpose to speak of Keshub Chandra Sen as the Apostle of Hindu Theism. My purpose will be fulfilled if I explain every term of the title of my address. I need not tell you in detail who Keshub Chandra Sen was. I need not dwell upon the particulars of his life and work. His life has been told and re-told several times. For those who have not yet had occasion to go through a biography of Mr. Sen, but wish to do so in future, I may mention the chief books that have been written on the subject. The most detailed life of the great teacher is the one which some of his immediate disciples, Pandit Gour Govinda Ray Upandhyaya among them, are writing in Bengali. Five volumes of this book have been already published and perhaps two or three more will complete it. The next to be mentioned is that written in English by Babu Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, the work of a devoted but at the same time impartial follower and friend of Mr. Sen's. The two others I shall mention is a Bengali Life by Babu Trailokyanath Sanyal, a pious follower of Mr. Sen, who goes under the assumed name of

Chiranjiva Sarma, and an English Life by the Rev. Mr. Slater, a Christian Missionary. For those who know Keshub Chandra only by name, and there may be such in this assembly, I shall give a few bare details of his life, specially as, without some such details, the subsequent portion of my address will be unintelligible to them. Keshub Chandra Sen was born in 1838. He studied English and Philosophy at the Hindu College, but left it without taking any academical degrees or other distinctions. About 1857, he joined the Brahmo Samaj, which was then in the second stage of its progress, under the pious guidance of its second great leader, Maharshi Devendranath Thakur. He helped the Maharshi in strengthening the theological and social foundations of the Samaj and in extending its influence far and wide; but in the course of a few years, difference of a practical nature, on the methods of religious and social reform, grew between the two leaders, and Keshub Chandra separated from his venerable friend with a number of devoted followers. In one word, the point of difference may be said to have been "Caste." Keshub Chandra was for an immediate abolition of caste from the ideal society of Hindu reformers that was forming, whereas the Maharshi was opposed to the adoption of any drastic measures in the matter. The subsequent career of our reformer, as the leader of the Brahmo Samaj of India established by him shortly after his secession from the parent church, is characterized by singular earnestness and activity. The result was the dissemination of his views throughout the country and even in distant Europe, which he visited, and to a certain extent in America also. But according to the laws that govern society, the radical of to-day often proves to be the conservative of to-morrow, and so by and by, through Keshub Chandra's own reforming activity, there grew around him men whose views were in advance of his in matters of reform and church government. These differences culminated on the occasion of the

marriage of Mr. Sen's first daughter with the Maharaja of Kuch Behar, and there followed a second schism in the Brahmo Samaj. Mr. Sen's labours after the establishment of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj by those who differed from him, assumed an eminently synthetic and constructive character. He aimed at the formation of a church which should combine and conserve all that is good in the various established churches, and yet should not be a body of wide eclectics without historical foundations to stand and work upon, but should proceed on lines laid down by the collective experience of the nation, so far as these were consistent with liberal ideas. I need not pronounce any judgment upon his success, not upon his differences with those who opposed him. Suffice it to say that in all that he did, in all that he succeeded or failed in doing, he aimed at the good of his country, which he loved with all his heart and soul, and that for his life long labours in its service, the country owes him "a debt immense of endless gratitude." These labours, however,—the labours of concentrated thought, of intense devotional exercises, of writing and speaking, of cares for a divided church which, though burdened with the deepest responsibility, yet seemed inadequately conscious of it—were too much for a frame nursed under principles too ascetic and rigorous, and the great reformer passed away in 1884, at the early age of 45.

I have now told you who Keshub Chandra Sen was, I have told you enough that can distinguish him from other individuals and hold out his personality in a prominent manner. I shall now tell you why I call him an apostle. An apostle is one that is sent out on a special mission. Was Keshub Chandra Sen specially sent out by God, and had he really a mission to fulfil? I say yes, and in proof of my assertion I adduce the strongest of all possible evidence—facts. A tree is known by its fruits, When we find a tree producing sweet mangoes, we come to the conclusion that it has God-given powers to do so and is designed by the Author of Nature to discharge

this function. Likewise, judge Keshub Chandra Sen by his work. Trace the ideas he has preached and made like current coin in the country, to their source. See how they have taken root in the mind of educated India, how they are unconsciously guiding even those who are professedly opposed to his views, and how they are effecting a slow but sure change in our thoughts and feelings, our sympathies and antipathies, and in our practical conduct, individual and social. So far as the result of Keshub Chandra Sen's work is concerned, Keshub Chandra Sen is not dead, but is living anew every year, I might say every day ; for the work inaugurated by him, the establishment of a reformed and growing society, guided on national lines by free and liberal ideas on religion and society is daily prospering,—directly by visible addition to the body established by him, and indirectly by the gradual permeation of the great mass of the nation by his ideas. To those who can judge and estimate evidence, this is an unmistakeable proof of Keshub Chandra Sen's apostleship.

I have called Keshub Chandra Sen the apostle of Hindu Theism. I shall say a few words in explanation of the word 'Theism', and in that of my calling Keshub Chandra the apostle of Theism, is the doctrine of one God, of one personal God, if 'personal' is the word that expresses his transcendent knowledge, the knowledge that oversteps the limits of space, time and individuality. It is opposed, first, to Atheism, the doctrine of the non-existence of God, secondly to Agnosticism, the view that the cause of the world is unknown and unknowable, thirdly to Polytheism, the notion of a plurality of Divine persons, fourthly to Pantheism, the theory that ignores the transcendent aspect of the Divine nature, that sees no distinction between Divine power as it manifests itself in the form of objects in time and space and the Divine essence beyond Nature, and thus denies the existence of either of these aspects of Reality ; and lastly to Deism,

which, ascribing the creation of the world to God, yet denies his direct guidance of Nature and his immediate relation to the human mind. This is Theism, the doctrine of a living, personal God in immediate relation to Nature and man. This is the religion which Keshub Chandra embraced in his early youth, which he felt called upon by God to preach, and for the propagation of which he lived and died. In calling Keshub Chandra Sen the apostle of Theism, I am far from meaning that I hold him to the only apostle of this religion. This religion has been preached, both in this and other lands, by a host of apostles ancient and modern, and even in the small body of Theistic reformers that Keshub Chandra joined in his early youth, he had two eminent predecessors on the apostolic line. I mean Raja Ram Mohan Ray and Maharshi Devendra Nath Thakur. But I really believe that in certain respect Keshub Chandra was the most eminent of Theistic apostles. The combination of reforming zeal with intense spiritual fervour is a thing extremely rare in religious history, especially in the history of free, rational religion. This rare combination was realized in Keshub Chandra Sen, and in a degree unknown in the history of Theism, both here and elsewhere. Keshub Chandra was a reformer and a saint, and he continued to be so to the end of his life. However conservative he may have seemed to some of us in his latter days his reforming zeal never left him. What may be described as the most conservative act of his life, his daughter's marriage with the Maharaja of Kuchbehar, was, it must be remembered, an inter-caste marriage,—a most radical step from one point of view. As to his devotional fervour, nothing need be said by me, His opponents believed in it so deeply that they wished he had rather less of it than more. For these reasons, the definite article before "apostle" is not without its significance. It can be said truly that Keshub Chandra Sen preached Theism in a way that no one else did.



I now come to the adjective I have put before the word Theism. What do I mean by 'Hindu Theism,' and in what sense was Keshub Chandra Sen's 'Theism' Hindu and not otherwise? In the most general sense of the term 'Hindu,' 'Hindu Theism' may mean any species of Theistic doctrine preached by a man belonging to the Hindu nation. If any one likes, one may confine the phrase 'Hindu Theism' to this wide meaning and call Keshub's Theism "Hindu Theism" in no other sense than this. But I have called it "Hindu Theism" in a deeper and more special sense. There have been three distinct types of Theism in the history of religion, and these three types still divide the Theistic thinkers of the world. They are the Hebrew, the Greek and the Hindu types. To put their distinctive features briefly,—Hebrew Theism is the doctrine of an Author and Preserver of the world who has moral relations with the individual soul, but who is nevertheless distinct and apart from the world and the human spirit. Greek Theism,—if we leave out that form of it which, under the name of Neo-platonism, was intimately connected in form, and perhaps in history also with Hindu Theism,—teaches the existence of an Author of Nature, who, though he guides the world in general, and desires human virtue has no direct relation to individuals. Thirdly, Hindu Theism believes in an infinite, spiritual Being who manifests his power in the form of Nature and makes the human soul out of his own essence, and is thus immanent in Nature as its very power and substance, and in Man as the Soul of his soul, and guides the latter, through various stages of progress, to final union with him. In various respects, too numerous to be detailed even briefly, this last form of Theism differs from what goes under the same name in Europe and other parts of the world. It has itself various forms according to varying conditions of individual and social progress; but it has characteristics which distinguish it from the two

other forms mentioned, whatever forms it may assume according to the spiritual capacities or surroundings of its believers. In its doctrinal aspect, it clings to a belief in the immanence of God in Nature and Man, and never ventures to think of them as independent of God. In its practical aspects, it is characterized by a hankering after communion with God, and can never bear to keep God far from the soul. The most ancient as well as the most revered literature of this form of Theism are the Upanishads, otherwise called the Vedantas or the Vedanta, and next to them, the works of their numerous commentators and expounders. Hindu Theism is therefore identical with Vedantism, though this latter name has often been wrongly appropriated to a particular interpretation of the religion of the Upanishads. Now, what I would show is that Keshub Chandra Sen's Theism, though it changed its form from time to time according to the laws of spiritual progress, was always of this Hindu or Vedantic type. To make this clear, to answer possible objections to the view I take, it would be necessary to enter into a few details of the history of his own life and of the body to which he belonged.

It may be said at the very outset, that, the Brahmo Samaj, though originally a body of Vedantic worshippers, had, even before Keshub Chandra's connection with the body commenced, discarded Vedantism and committed itself to a bare, colourless Theism or some other historical type of Theism than the Hindu. Now, as to this movement, miscalled by Brahmos, and even by Keshub himself the "discarding of Vedantism," it is necessary to say that it was more the dogma of Vedic infallibility that was overthrown on the occasion than anything else. The then members of the Brahmo Samaj had been believing in their ignorance, that the Vedas, the Vedantas included, could not contain anything repugnant to their enlightened views. A study of the Vedas dissipated this hope and they discarded their

belief in the infallible inspiration and authority of the National Scriptures and called this rather mild reform by a too strong name—"the discarding of Vedantism." It is indeed true that while discarding the dogma of Scriptural infallibility, they also spoke a good deal about the Vedantic doctrines of the unity of God and Nature and of God and man, and that of the transmigration of the soul,—doctrines which at that time they were neither intellectually nor spiritually advanced enough to understand,—to separate from the tentative expressions in which they were couched in the Vedantic writings. However, what I mean specially to point out is that notwithstanding this formal discarding of Vedantism, the religion of the Brahmo Samaj remained, in spirit, deeply Vedantic, a fact that is proved by the sermons of the venerable leader of the Samaj in those times, and also by the same gentleman's annotated selections from the Vedas the work entitled *Brahmo Dharma*, of which Keshub Chandra says in his lecture on the *Brahmo Samaj Vindicated*, delivered in 1863 :—

"Though the Vedas were no longer regarded as the basis of Brahmoism, and their errors and absurdities were abjured, the good things in the superstructure were retained and continue to this day ; and the *Brahmo Dharma* book of the present day contains the truths of the Vedanta with natural reason for their basis."

Keshub Chandra Sen then, in entering the Brahmo Samaj, and embracing its religion, entered a body of Hindu Theists, and began to profess a species of Hindu Theism. What his later opinion was in regard to this so called "discarding of Vedantism," will be seen as we go on. In the mean time, his Theism grew in depth and clearness, and in explaining his theory of "Great Men" in 1866, he said :—"If incarnation means the spirit of God manifest in human flesh certainly every man is an incarnation. And great men are pre eminently

so, for they exhibit a larger measure of the divine spirit. They are singularly brilliant manifestations of that Eternal Light which all men in some measure reflect."

The Vedantic doctrine of universal incarnation hinted in these lines was developed further as Keshub grew in spirit, and in 1879 it was applied the explication of the Christian doctrine of incarnation. I shall make only one extract—a very significant extract—from the lecture on "India asks—Who is Christ?" in which this exposition is given. "Meanwhile," says Keshub Chandra Sen, "I must beg your acceptance of the truly national solution of the problem I have presented to you. You will find on reflection that the doctrine of divine humanity is essentially a Hindu doctrine, and the picture of life and character I have drawn is altogether a picture of ideal Hindu life."

In the lecture on "*God-vision in the Nineteenth Century*," delivered in 1881, the Hindu or Vedantic form of Keshub's Theism has attained its fulness. *Yoga*, union with God, the Vedantist's highest goal, became, in later life, Keshub's highest object, his very watchword, and he scarcely said anything that did not bear upon this subject. I had marked out many passages from both his Bengali and English discourses, bearing on the point contended for by me, but I shall put them off for want of time and content myself by reading, first a few passages from his essay on "*Yoga: Subjective and Objective*," and then a few from a Bengali sermon preached in the Brahma Mandir.

Speaking of subjective or Vedantic Yoga, in the essay referred to, Keshub Chandra says: "Instead of confronting single foes and vanquishing special vices, he (the Yogi) goes valiantly into the very heart of the enemy's citadel, and tries to overthrow it completely. His ethics is not negative and destructive, but positive and constructive. His ideal of moral and spiritual perfection is not No-sin, No-sensuality, No-worldliness, No-pride, but positive Godliness. He seeks not



so, for they exhibit a larger measure of the divine retirement from the world, but admission into heaven. He will have no other salvation than the absorption of I, mine and me in the God-head. And this absorption he endeavours to bring about by constant contemplation. So thoroughly does he concentrate his attention in the reality of the Infinite Spirit, that his little unreal self gradually wanes and fades away, like the borrowed and reflected radiance of the moon before the rising sun. When the real comes, the unreal disappears. It is quite clear now that there is no power in self but it is of God; no wisdom, no love, no holiness, but it is Divine."

I shal next read to you a few extracts (in translation) from a Bengali sermon on "the National Dispensation" preached in the Brahma Mandir and published in the second volume of the series, *Sevaker Niveitan* :—"We shall revere", says the great preacher, "the saints of all nations...but our New Dispensation cannot be a Jewish, Greek or Muhammadan dispensation, it will remain fundamentally a Hindu dispensation.....This tree, grown by the Hindu race, must first be deeply rooted in Hindustan, must be nourished with Hindu blood, and then spread its branches on all sides.....The Brahmo of the New Dispensation is the only true Hindu..... It is improper to denounce the Brahmos as anti-Hindu as men who have forsworn their nationality and religion; this is not true; in reality the Brahmos are the only true Hindus."

Keshub Chandra Sen and his disciples must now have felt that the so-called discarding of Vedantism by the Brahma Samaj was a mistake,—that though they could not accept now, any more than at the time of their joining the Somaj, the dogma of Vedantic infallibility—a dogma, which, by the way, is not to be found in the Vedanta itself—they were, in spirit, and in essential doctrines, nothing but Vedantists. It was therefore

distinctly declared in the columns of their journal, the *Liberal*, that the Apostolic body, or the New Dispensation Church, had returned to the Vedanta. This announcement was made on the 7th June, 1885, shortly after Keshub's death, and presumably therefore in his spirit and under the inspiration of his teachings. I shall read to you the passage which contains it: "*Our Return to the Vedanta.*—We need not say very much upon our return to the Vedanta. This is a known fact. The foundation of Brahmoism was laid upon the *Upanishads*. Although we have advanced, the foundation remains the same."

Let it be known and rembered then in all our controversies, that Keshub's Theism is Hindu Theism, a refined form, suited to the times, of the exalted Theism of India's early teachers, and that Keshub Chandra was a true descendent of the Rishis, one who deserves the profoundest reverence of the nation as a reviver, purifier, preacher and organizer of their deeply spiritual religion.

From "*Brahma-tattva*"  
1301, B.S. (1898)

COUNT GOBLET ALVIELLA'S  
THE CONTEMPORARY EVOLUTION OF RELIGIOUS  
THOUGHT IN ENGLAND, AMERICA AND INDIA  
(Translated by J. Moden)

*London, Williams and Norgate 1885 pp. 288 289.*

If the ceremonies instituted by Keshub, instead of being drawn from a single system of religion are borrowed indifferently from all, is there any ground for blaming him in this which is, in reality, a pledge and a proof of toleration? The fusion of all the forms of faith into a single religious synthesis, has been, in every age, the dream of many a large and enlightened of its time. Aristotle, Cleanthes, Seneca, Maximus of Tyre, Confucius, Kabir, the neo-Platonists, the Authors of the Upanishads, the Sofis of Persia, as well as German Idealists and the contemporary students of comparative theology, have all shown the identity of religious sentiment under the multiplicity of its manifestations. A few thinkers like Proclus, Janbilicus and Alexander Severus in antiquity, Akbar in India during the Middle Ages, and to a certain extent Auguste Counter in our own day, have even attempted to found a universal religion—not, indeed by eliminating the differential elements of the principal forms of faith, after the manner of English Theism and American Transcendentalism but by commingling either the rites or symbols or the names and forms under which their adherents conceived the Supreme object of worship.

Such, too, was the work commenced by Keshub, and if there is any difference, it is that the author of the New Dispensation succeeded in founding a religion,



while his predecessors scarcely did more than carry their syncretism beyond the sphere of individual conception. Roman polytheism stands alone, perhaps, as the only instance of an ultimate amalgamation of this kind, but even in that case, it was a juxta-position, rather than a synthesis of the various forms of religions practised in the Empire. It was reserved for the New Dispensation to offer us a Living Church formed, as a single conception, with materials drawn from the most diverse faiths, and this is not one of the characteristics which contribute least to render its development so interesting to all who are engaged in the study of religious history.

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FROM  
CANON T. K. CHEYNE'S  
"THE RECONCILIATION OF RACES AND RELIGIONS,"  
(*London, A. and C. Black, 1914.*)

The greatest religious teachers and reformers who have appeared in recent times are (if I am not much mistaken) Baha-ullah the Persian and Keshab Chandra Sen the Indian. The one began by being a reformer of Muhammadan Society or Chhrch, the other by acting in the same capacity for the Indian community and more especially for the Brahmo Somaj—a very imperfect loosely organised religions society or church founded by Ram-mohan Roy. By a natural evolution the objects of both reformers were enlarged ; both became founders of world churches though circumstances prevented the extension of the Brotherhood of the New Dispensation beyond the limits of India. (pp.189-190).

I do not say that Baha-ullah is unique or that his revelations are final. There will be other Messiahs after him, nor is the race of prophets extinct. The supposition of finality is treason to the ever active, ever creative Spirit of Truth. But till we have already entered upon a new *aeon*, we shall have to look back in a special degree to prophets who introduced our own *aeon*, Baha-ullah and Keshab Chandra Sen, whose common object is the spiritual unification of all peoples. For it is plain that this union of peoples can only be obtained through the influence of prophetic personages, those of the past as well as those of the present. (pp. 190-191).

I do not see, therefore, why we christians (who have a good deal of myth in our religion) should object to

a fusion with Islam and Hinduism. Only I do desire that both the Hindu and the Christian myths should be treated symbolically. On this (so far as the former are concerned) I agree with Keshab Chandra Sen in the last phase of his incomplete religious development, That the myths of Hinduism require sifting, can not, I am sure, be denied. (p. 197).

T. K. CHEYNE'S

"Reconciliation of Races and Religion"

"A moth loves the light though its wings are burnt. Though his wings are singed, he throws himself against the flame. He does not love the light because it has conferred some benefits upon him. Therefore he hovers round the light, though he sacrifices his wings. This is the highest degree of love. Without this abandonment, this ecstasy love is imperfect. The Lover of God loves Him for Himself, not for his own sake.—From "Abbas Effendi," by E. S. Stevens,—Fortnightly Review, June, 1911, p. 1067.

This is surely the essence of mysticism. As a characteristic of the Church of "the Abha" it goes back as we have seen, to the Bab. As a characteristic of the Brotherhood of the 'New Dispensation' it is plainly set forth by Keshub Chandra Sen. It is also Christian and goes back to Paul and John. This is the hidden wisdom—the pearl of great price, (pp. 155 156).

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DR. P. CHATTERJI'S  
LAST KESHUB ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS.

*8th January, 1931*

ALBERT HALL, CALCUTTA.

(Extracts.)

What is it that made Keshub go great—a question which has been answered by an American who stated that Keshub had pushed India a century ahead. I repeat the sentence to you and endorse every letter of it. The thought which he gave us, the principles of religion which he preached, the life which he led, have worked wonders in this country of ours, consciously or unconsciously. Keshub's dream is the dream of to-day; Keshub's thought is the thought of to-day; Keshub's universality of religion is the religion of the world to day. It is the most wonderful phenomenon of the world's history that all the religious systems of the world are now coming towards a common meeting ground. Keshub pushed India by his thoughts and the force of his character, by the immense fund of life which he had in him. His message is, on the whole, the message of a universal federation—the federation of the saints, great men and prophets of the world. He conquered India by the immense force of character. He was a great saint and a prince among men. The new India will be born of Keshub's dream.

[From Advance, The Liberty and the Amrita Bazar Patrika of 9th January, 1931].

PROF. RADHA KRISHNA

"So far as the political future of the world is concerned we have come to recognise that our hopes rest on the League of Nations, So also in religion. That can be achieved on the basis of what may be regarded as the League of Religions under which religions should live together. It is this kind of consummation that we all desire. This has been the idea of our Rishis. This has also been the idea which inspired Keshub Chander."

".....since religions could not be abolished and there could be no deposing of religions and since one religion could not dominate or subjugate another, the only way of bringing about religious unity lay in the way of a Spiritual Commonwealth. It was this idea of Spiritual Unity, which Keshub laid down, with remarkable emphasis and spiritual fervour, for humanity.

"What strikes me most in Keshub Chunder's life is his great idea of a world synthesis on a religious basis. If India is going to make any effective contribution to the international unity, it can only be on the basis of religious genius.

[*Ibid.*]

"Keshub Chander Sen died young, but he completed in the short span of his life the work of an epoch. It is not given to all men to be the leaders of mankind, far less to be the founder of a new creed. Keshub Chunder Sen was both. He was imbued with a faith with which he swayed the minds of men. The religion which he preached had no elements of objectivity, but was a pure inspiration of the heart, to which the heart responds without looking up to the intellect for its guidance. Keshub Chunder Sen will be remembered by us as we remember Chaitanya rather than we remember Sankaracharya or even Raja Rammohan Roy. We remember him not with awe and veneration, but with

affection and devotion. We remember his teachings not to discuss how far they are a deviation from the orthodox creed or how far they bear resemblance to the doctrines of the Vedanta, but as a message of God-will and religious co-operation, as attempt to bring Harmony and Peace into the world and to synthesise the nations of the earth into one single organization.

[*Advance*, 8 January, 1931.]

Four decades havn passed away since Keshub Chunder Sen left his mortal frame. To most people of the present generation Keshub Chunder is only a historical personality; but his great piety, his sublime teachings and moral magnetism still continue to influence and mould our national life to a very large extent. "Great men" said Keshub Chunder, "are men of great ideals." Judged by this standard, Keshub was great not only in his own generation, but he is regarded as one of the representative men of the age. As a social and religious reformer he occupies a unique place in the history of modern India. As an orator he was unequalled in his days and held his audience almost under a spell. Humanity, faith and holiness were the essence of his character. The new church that he founded, the church of the New Dispensation, was based on the tenets of humanity. It is a church of synthesis and harmony in which the spirit of christianity, the teachings of Islam and of the great sages of Hinduism are held in equal veneration.

Of all things Keshub Chunder will be held in the highest esteem for the stand he made against the denationalising and disintegrating forces of the day. What is only superficial in Western culture, what relates only to the exterior of life, made a heavy onslaught on Indian life in his time, and Keshub gave a powerful check to these disintegrating forces. "Truth was not European"

said Keshub Chunder. "and it would be a mistake to force European institutions upon the Hindus, who would resist any attempt to denationalise them." There are words of wisdom. These are powerful words that have saved a nation in the past. We have need of this illumination to day.

*Liberty, 8th January 1931.*

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# বাংলার নবযুগের কথা

১৩২৯ সালের “বঙ্গবাণী” পত্রিকায়

স্বর্গীয় বিপিনচন্দ্র পাল লিখিত

ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ ও ব্রহ্মানন্দ কেশবচন্দ্র

( ১৯২২ খৃঃ পূঃ )

বাংলার নবযুগের মূলমন্ত্র স্বাধীনতা ও মানবতা। ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ধর্মসাধনের ক্ষেত্রেই এই স্বাধীনতার ও মানবতার আদর্শকে ফুটাইয়া তুলিতে চেষ্টা করেন, জীবনের সকল বিভাগে সর্বতোভাবে ইহাকে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিতে যান নাই। এ কাজটা করেন কেশবচন্দ্র। এইজন্তই বাংলার নবযুগের ইতিহাসে কেশবচন্দ্র একটা অতি উচ্চস্থান অধিকার করিয়া আছেন।

আটত্রিশ বৎসর হইল কেশবচন্দ্র সংসারলীলা সম্বরণ করিয়াছেন। এই আটত্রিশ বৎসরের মধ্যে আমাদের শিক্ষিত সমাজে যাহারা জন্মিয়া বাড়িয়া উঠিয়াছেন, তাঁহারা কেশবচন্দ্রকে ভাল করিয়া জানেন না। এই আটত্রিশ বৎসরের মধ্যে এদেশের চিন্তা ও কর্মের উপরে ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের প্রত্যক্ষ প্রভাবও অত্যন্ত হ্রাস হইয়া পড়িয়াছে। ইহার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে কেশবচন্দ্রের প্রতিষ্ঠাও কমিয়াছে। প্রথম যৌবনে কেশবচন্দ্র যে চিন্তা ও সাধনার ধারা প্রবর্তিত করিয়াছিলেন, তাহা একরূপ শুকাইয়া গিয়াছে। কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবদ্দশাতেই শুকাইতে আরম্ভ



করে। তাঁহার শেষ জীবনের চিন্তা ও সাধনা অল্প খাতে প্রবাহিত হইয়া নিজেই সেই আদি স্রোতকে ক্ষীণ করিয়া তুলে। কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবদ্দশায় বিশেষতঃ তাঁহার প্রথম যৌবনে যে সকল সমস্তা শিক্ষিত বাঙ্গালীর চিত্তকে অভিভূত করিয়াছিল, আজিকার শিক্ষিত সমাজের সমক্ষে সে সকল সমস্তা নাই। এই সকল কারণে আজিকালিকার লোকের পক্ষে কেশবচন্দ্রের সাধনার যথার্থ মূল্য গ্রহণ অত্যন্ত কঠিন হইয়া পড়িয়াছে। এখানকার শিক্ষিত লোকে কেশবচন্দ্রের নামমাত্রই জানেন, তাঁহার অলোকসামান্য বাগ্মীতার কথাও লোকপরিচরিত শুনিয়াছেন; কিন্তু বাংলার বর্তমান চিন্তা ও সাধনা কতটা পরিমাণে যে কেশবচন্দ্রের কাছে ঋণী, ইহা কল্পনাও করিতে পারেন না।

কেশবচন্দ্রের জন্মকালে এ দেশের প্রাচীন ধর্ম ও সমাজ মানুষের স্বাধীনতাকে হরণ করিয়া তাহার মনুষ্যত্বকে খাটো করিয়া রাখিয়াছিল। ধর্মের সহিত ধার্মিকের প্রত্যক্ষ অনুভবের কোনও সম্বন্ধ ছিল না। কালের পুতুলের মত মানুষ ধর্মের আদেশ মানিয়া চলিতেছিল। গীতা কহিয়াছেন:—

চতুর্বিধাঃ ভজন্তে মাং জনাঃ স্কৃতিনোহর্জুনঃ।

অর্ন্তঃ জিজ্ঞাসুরর্থার্থী জ্ঞানী চ ভরতর্ষভ ॥

চারি শ্রেণীর স্কৃতি সম্পন্ন লোকে, হে অর্জুন, আমার ভজনা করে। প্রথম অর্ন্ত, দ্বিতীয় জিজ্ঞাসু, তৃতীয় অর্থার্থী এবং চতুর্থ জ্ঞানী। এই চারি শ্রেণীর উপাসকের মধ্যে সমাজে সে সময়ে জ্ঞানী ও জিজ্ঞাসু ছিলেন না, বলিলেই চলে। অর্ন্ত, অর্থার্থী আসন্ন বিপদের আশঙ্কায় ষাঁহার। ভগবানের শরণাপন্ন হন, এবং অর্থার্থী, অর্থার্থী ষাঁহার। কোনও ঈর্ষিত লাভের লোভে দেবতার ভজনা করেন, এই দুই শ্রেণীর

উপাসকেই তখন যা কিছু আন্তরিক ভক্তিরে ধর্ম্মাচরণ করিতেন। ধর্ম্ম যেখানে সত্য হয়, সেখানে মানুষকে সংসাহসী এবং শক্তিশালী করিয়া তুলে। সত্য ধর্ম্ম লাভ করিলে মানুষ ভয় ভাবনার অতীত হইয়া যায়।

স্বলমপ্যস্ত ধর্ম্মস্ত ত্রায়তে মহতোভয়াং।

এই সত্য ধর্ম্মের স্বল্পপরিমাণও পাইলে ধার্ম্মিক মহৎ ভয় হইতেও পরিত্রাণ প্রাপ্ত হ'ন। কিন্তু সে সময়ের ধর্ম্ম ভয়ের উপরেই গড়িয়া উঠিয়াছিল। সংসারের ক্ষতির ভয়ই সে ধর্ম্মের প্রেরণা ছিল। মানুষ এইরূপে সর্ব্বদা ভয়ের তাড়নায় চলিতে বাধ্য হইলে তাহার জ্ঞান, কর্ম্ম এবং ভক্তি, সকলই অত্যন্ত পঙ্গু হইয়া পড়ে। ভয়ে মানুষকে তামসিক করিয়া তুলে। কেশবচন্দ্রের জন্মকালে এই তামসিকতাতেই বাংলার সমাজ আচ্ছন্ন ছিল।

ইহার পূর্বেই ইংরাজী শিক্ষা প্রচলিত হয়। কেশবচন্দ্রের বাল্য-জীবনে সেই শিক্ষার ফলে ইংরাজীনবীশ বাঙ্গালীদিগের মধ্যে চারিদিকে একটা অনাচার ও উচ্ছৃঙ্খলতার স্রোত প্রবাহিত হয়। সেই স্রোতের মাঝখানেই কেশবচন্দ্রের বাল্যজীবন অতিবাহিত হয়। কিন্তু তাঁহার পূর্ব্ব পুরুষদিগের সাধনের বলে চারিদিকের এই অনাচার ও উচ্ছৃঙ্খলতা কেশবচন্দ্রকে স্পর্শ করিতে পারে নাই। কেশবচন্দ্রের পূর্ব্বপুরুষেরা বৈষ্ণব ছিলেন। পূর্ব্বপুরুষদিগের ভক্তিসাধনের ফলেই কেশবচন্দ্র প্রথম যৌবনের চারিদিকের স্বৈচ্ছাচার এবং অনাচারের মধ্যে নিজেকে সংযম ও সদাচারের বেষ্টনীর ভিতরে রক্ষা করিতে পারিয়াছিলেন।

বাংলার বৈষ্ণব-সাধনার দুইটা ধারা। এক ধারা বৈদী ভক্তির

ধারা। দ্বিতীয় ধারাকে রাগানুরাগ বা রাগান্বিতা ভক্তিদ্বারা বলে। বাংলার ভদ্রসমাজের বৈষ্ণবেরা বৈধী ভক্তির সাধনই করিতেন। বৈধী ভক্তি আচার-বিচার মানিয়া চলে। ভদ্র শ্রেণীর বাঙ্গালী বৈষ্ণবেরা এইজন্ত মনু, পরাশর প্রভৃতির স্মৃতির অনুসরণ করিয়া চলেন। ভক্তিপন্থী হইলেও ই হারা প্রচলিত মায়াবাদের প্রভাবকে অতিক্রম করিতে পারেন না। এইজন্ত বৈষ্ণবদিগের মধ্যেও কখনও কখনও কঠোর সংসার-বৈরাগ্য দেখিতে পাওয়া যায়। বৈজিকগুণে কেশবচন্দ্রও যৌবনে পদার্পণ করিতে না করিতে অত্যন্ত সংসার-বিরাগী হইয়া উঠেন। কেশবচন্দ্র কহিয়াছেন যে এই সময়ে তিনি তাঁহার প্রাণের ভিতর এই বাণী শুনিতে পাইলেন—“ওরে, তুই সংসারী হ’স্ না, সংসারের নিকট মাথা বিক্রয় করিস্ না; কলঙ্ক, পাপ এসকল ভারী কথা; আপাততঃ আমোদ ছাড়; আমোদের হুত্র ধরিয়াই অনেকে নরকে যায়।” কেশব তখন আমোদকে বলিলেন—“তুই শয়তান, তুই পাপ,” বিলাসকে বলিলেন—“তুই নরক, যে তোর আশ্রয় গ্রহণ করে, সেই মৃত্যুগ্রাসে পড়ে।” এমন কি শরীরকে বলিলেন—“তুই নরকের পথ, তোকে আমি শাসন করিব, তুই মৃত্যুখে ফেলিবি।” এই অদ্ভুত বৈরাগ্যই কেশবচন্দ্রকে তাঁর প্রথম যৌবনে বাংলার ইংরাজীনবীশ সমাজের অনাচার ও উচ্ছৃঙ্খলতা হইতে রক্ষা করিয়াছিল। কিন্তু এইজন্ত ইংরাজী শিক্ষা যে প্রবল যুক্তিবাদ ও ব্যক্তিস্বাভিত্ত্য জাগাইয়াছিল, তাহার প্রভাব হইতে কেশবচন্দ্রকে বাঁচাইতে পারে নাই; বরঞ্চ তাঁহার মধ্যে এই নূতন স্বাধীনতার আদর্শকে ধর্মের আদর্শের দ্বারা সংযত করিয়া আরও শক্তিশালী করিয়া তুলিয়াছিল।

ইংরাজী শিক্ষা যে ব্যক্তিস্বাতন্ত্র্যের আদর্শ জাগাইয়া তুলে, কেশবচন্দ্র তাহারই মধ্যে একটা প্রবল ধর্মের প্রেরণা সঞ্চারিত করেন। ইতিপূর্বে আমাদের ইংরাজীনবীশেরা নিরঙ্কুশ স্বাধীনতাকেই তাঁহাদের জীবনের লক্ষ্যরূপে বরণ করিয়া লইয়াছিলেন। এই স্বাধীনতার সঙ্গে স্বৈচ্ছাচারিতার বিশেষ পার্থক্য ছিল না। ভাঙ্গাই তাঁহাদের জীবনের প্রধান ও প্রথম কর্তব্য হইয়া উঠে। একরূপ ভাঙ্গার কাজ কিছুদিন এবং কিয়দূর পর্য্যন্তই চলিতে পারে; বেশী দিন বা বেশী দূরে যাইতে পারে না। নিরঙ্কুশ স্বাধীনতা-লিপ্সা প্রায় কখনই নিষ্ফল হইতে পারে না; সর্বদাই ফলাপেক্ষী হইয়া থাকে। এইজন্য এই স্বাধীনতার মধ্যে ভাল করিয়া ত্যাগের শক্তি জাগিতে পারে না। রাষ্ট্রীয় স্বাধীনতার লোভে লোকে প্রাণ পর্য্যন্ত পণ করে, বটে। কিন্তু এই স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রামের ভিতরে একটা বলবতী বৈরীতা জাগিয়া রহে। রাজশক্তির অত্যাচারের দ্বারাই রাষ্ট্রীয় স্বাধীনতার প্রেরণা জাগ্রত হয়। এই স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রামে অত্যাচারী রাজশক্তির উপরে প্রতিহিংসা তুলিবার আকাঙ্ক্ষা খুব প্রবল হইয়া রহে। এই প্রতিহিংসা প্রবৃত্তির মাদকতাতেই মানুষকে প্রাণ পর্য্যন্ত বিসর্জন দিতে প্রণোদিত করে। যে স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রামের ভিতরে একরূপ প্রতিহিংসা প্রবৃত্তি থাকে না, সেই স্বাধীনতার প্রেরণা ধর্মবিশ্বাস হইতে আসিলেই কেবল মানুষকে ত্যাগের পথে লইয়া যাইতে পারে। অত্যাধী এই স্বাধীনতার গতিবেগ সামান্য বাধাবিপত্তি পাইলেই থামিয়া যায়। ইংরাজী শিক্ষা আমাদের মধ্যে যে স্বাধীনতার আদর্শ জাগাইয়াছিল, ধর্মের প্রেরণা না পাইলে তাহাও প্রাচীন সমাজের তাড়নায় অল্পেতেই থামিয়া যাইত। ভারতের অগ্ন্যাগ্ন প্রদেশে ইহা হইয়াছে। যেখানেই এই

স্বাধীনতার অন্তরালে ধর্মের প্রেরণা ছিল না, সেইখানেই এই সংগ্রাম বাধিতে না বাধিতেই থামিয়া গিয়াছে; সেইখানেই সমাজশক্তি ব্যক্তিস্বাতন্ত্র্যের আকাঙ্ক্ষাকে সহজে চাপিয়া মারিয়াছে। বোম্বাই এবং মাদ্রাজের আধুনিক সমাজ-সংস্কারের ইতিহাসে ইহার বিলক্ষণ প্রমাণ পাওয়া গিয়াছে। বাংলা দেশেও যে পাওয়া যায় নাই, তাহা নহে। আমাদের মধ্যেও এমন দেখা গিয়াছে যে শুদ্ধ ব্যক্তিস্বাতন্ত্র্য প্রতিষ্ঠার জন্ত অনেক লোকে প্রাচীন সমাজের সমক্ষে হুঁচকারদিন বীরদর্পে বাহোন্স্ফোট করিয়া পরে বিষম ত্যাগের আহ্বান যখন আসিল, তখন রণে ভঙ্গ দিয়া তাহারা নিঃশেষে সেই সমাজের নিকটেই আত্ম বিক্রয় করিয়াছেন। ধর্মের প্রেরণা ব্যতীত সচরাচর এই ত্যাগের শক্তি জগে না। আমাদের নব্যসমাজে ইংরাজী শিক্ষা ও যুরোপীয় সাধনার সংস্পর্শে যে স্বাধীনতার আদর্শ ফুটিয়াছিল, তাহার মধ্যে ধর্মের প্রেরণা সঞ্চার করিয়া কেশবচন্দ্রই বিশেষভাবে একটা অসাধারণ ত্যাগের শক্তি জাগাইয়া তুলেন। এই ত্যাগের দ্বারাই বাংলার নবযুগের সাধনা মহিয়সী হইয়া আছে। কেশবচন্দ্র সমসাময়িক ইংরাজী শিক্ষিত দলের মধ্যে একটা জলন্ত অগ্নিশিখার মত আসিয়া পড়িলেন। সেই আগুনে বাংলার শিক্ষিত ও শিক্ষার্থী যুবক সম্প্রদায় একেবারে জলিয়া উঠিল, এবং এই অগ্নি-মন্ড্রে দীক্ষালাভ করিয়া বাংলার নবযুগের ইতিহাসে এক নতুন অধ্যায়ের সূচনা করিল।

ইংরাজী শিক্ষা ও ইংরাজী শাসনের ফলে আমাদের প্রথম যুগের ইংরাজীনবীশদিগের মতি-গতি নিতান্ত উচ্ছৃঙ্খল হইয়া উঠে; এবং ইঁহারা স্বদেশের সভ্যতা ও সাধনার প্রতি শ্রদ্ধাশূন্য হইয়া বিদেশী সভ্যতা ও সাধনার দিকে ছুটিতে আরম্ভ করেন। মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ

ইহাদের মতি-গতিকে সংযত করিয়া কিয়ৎপরিমাণে স্বদেশাভিমুখীন করেন। বাংলার নবযুগের ইতিহাসে ইহাই মহর্ষির প্রধান কীর্তি। মহর্ষির প্রকৃতির মধ্যে একদিকে যেন একটা বলবতী আন্তিক্যবুদ্ধি ছিল, অত্রদিকে সেইরূপ একটা দুর্জয় রক্ষণশীলতাও ছিল। ইংরাজী শিক্ষাপ্রভাবে দেশে যে বিপ্লবের বাণচাল ডাকিয়া উঠে, তাহাতেও মহর্ষির এই প্রকৃতিগত রক্ষণশীলতাকে নষ্ট করিতে পারে নাই। ধর্ম-বুদ্ধির প্রেরণায় মহর্ষি যখন দেশ-প্রচলিত ধর্ম-সংস্কারকে প্রকাশ্যভাবে বর্জন করিলেন, প্রচলিত প্রতিমা পূজাদিগকে অসত্য ও অধর্ম বলিয়া ত্যাগ করিলেন, তখনও এই রক্ষণশীলতা তাঁহাকে ত্যাগ করিল না। যাহা নিতান্ত না ছাড়িলে নয়, তাহাই তিনি ছাড়িলেন। প্রাচীন ও প্রচলিতের যতটুকু রক্ষা করা সম্ভব হয় প্রাণপণে তাহা রক্ষা করিবার জন্ত চেষ্টা করেন। তাঁহার চারিদিকের ইংরাজীনবীশেরা যখন ধর্মে এবং সমাজে প্রাচীন এবং প্রচলিতকে নিশ্চয়ভাবে ভাঙিতে চুরিতে আরম্ভ করেন, তখন মহর্ষি তাঁহার প্রকৃতিনিহিত এই রক্ষণ-শীলতার প্রেরণায় তাঁহার ধর্ম-বুদ্ধিকে রক্ষা করিয়া যতটা সম্ভব দেশের প্রাচীন ও প্রচলিত রীতিনীতিকে আঁকড়াইয়া ধরিয়া রহিলেন। মহর্ষি পৌরাণিক দেবদেবীর উপাসনা পরিহার করিয়া বিশুদ্ধ ব্রহ্মোপাসনা প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিলেন বটে, কিন্তু প্রচলিত জাতিভেদ একেবারে পরিহার করিলেন না। তাঁহার নেতৃত্বাধীনে আদি ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে ব্রাহ্মণেরাই কেবল আচার্য্যের কর্ম করিতে লাগিলেন। এ সকল ব্রাহ্মণ আচার্য্য-দিগের গলায় উপবীত থাকিত। ইহারা হিন্দু-সমাজের শাসন মানিয়া চলিতেন। বিবাহাদি সংস্কারে শালগ্রাম এবং ব্রাহ্মণ ডাকিতেন। তথাকথিত পৌত্তলিকতার সঙ্গে ইহারা সকল সম্বন্ধ কাটিয়া দেন নাই।

এইভাবে সমাজ-সংস্কার এবং ধর্ম-সংস্কারের মধ্যে একটা ব্যবধান জাগিয়া রহিল। একরূপ ব্যবধান এদেশে চিরদিনই ছিল। সকল হিন্দুই যে দেবদেবীর উপাসনা করেন, তাহা নহে। পণ্ডিতেরা দেবদেবীর উপাসনা বা প্রতিমা-পূজা যে কেবল নিকৃষ্ট অধিকারীর জগুই বিহিত হইয়াছে; এবং ব্রহ্মজ্ঞান ও ব্রহ্মোপাসনাই যে শ্রেষ্ঠতম উপাসনা, এ সকল কথা চিরদিনই মুক্তকণ্ঠে স্বীকার করিয়া আসিয়াছেন। দণ্ডী-সন্ন্যাসীরা এ সকল নিকৃষ্ট উপাসনাতে প্রবৃত্ত হন না। ইহাতে তাঁহাদের কোনও প্রত্যাবায়ও হয় না। এজন্ত লোকসমাজেও তাঁহাদিগকে নিন্দনীয় হইতে হয় না। মহর্ষি যে বিস্তৃত ব্রহ্মোপাসনা প্রবর্তিত করেন, হিন্দু-ধর্মের বা হিন্দু-সমাজের সঙ্গে তাহার বিশেষ কোনও বিরোধ ছিল না। নিতান্ত অজপল্লীগ্রামে ও জ্যেষ্ঠদিগের মুখে এই ব্রহ্মজ্ঞান ও ব্রহ্মোপাসনার সাধুবাদ শুনিয়াছি। মহর্ষির ধর্মের সঙ্গে তাঁহাদের কোনও বিরোধ ছিল না। তাঁহাদের সঙ্গে বিরোধটা জাগিয়া উঠে ব্রাহ্মধর্ম লইয়া নহে, কিন্তু ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের সামাজিক আদর্শ লইয়া। মহর্ষির সময়ে এ বিরোধটা ভাল করিয়া জাগে নাই। জাগে কেশবচন্দ্রের সময়ে। আর এই বিষয়ে কেশবচন্দ্রের প্রথম বিরোধ হয় মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথের সঙ্গে।

কেশবচন্দ্র প্রথমে মহর্ষির শিষ্যত্ব গ্রহণ করিয়া আদি ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে প্রবেশ করেন। মহর্ষিই কেশবচন্দ্রকে “ব্রহ্মানন্দ” উপাধিদান করেন। কেশবচন্দ্রের সহস্রকে মহর্ষি নানাদিক দিয়া তাঁহার প্রকৃতিনিহিত রক্ষণ-শীলতার বঁধনকে পর্য্যন্ত আলগা করিয়া দেন। তখন পর্য্যন্ত আদি ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের বেদীতে ব্রাহ্মণ ছাড়া আর কাহারও বসিবার অধিকার ছিল না। কেশবচন্দ্রের প্রতিভা ও গুণে মোহিত হইয়া মহর্ষি

তাঁহাকে ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের আচার্য্যপদে বরণ করেন। ১৭৮৪ শকের ১লা বৈশাখে নববর্ষের উপাসনা উপলক্ষে মহর্ষি কেশবচন্দ্রকে ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের আচার্য্যপদে অভিযুক্ত করেন। ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের আয়তন ক্রমশঃই বাড়িতেছিল। বাংলাদেশের নানাস্থানে ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইতেছিল। বাংলার বাহিরে ও উত্তর-পশ্চিমাঞ্চলে ব্রাহ্ম উপাসক-মণ্ডলী গড়িয়া উঠিতেছিল। এ অবস্থায় মহর্ষি দেখিলেন, তাঁহাকে যদি কেবল কলিকাতায় আবদ্ধ থাকিতে হয়, তাহা হইলে সকল সমাজের সম্যকরূপে তত্ত্বাবধারণ হয় না। তিনি বলিলেন—

“যেখানে যেখানে ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ স্থাপিত হইয়াছে, সেই সেই স্থানে আমার স্বয়ং যাইবার প্রয়োজন। আমি এখন আর কলিকাতায় বদ্ধ থাকিতে পারি না, সুতরাং এখানে একটি আচার্য্যের প্রয়োজন হইতেছে, অতএব এক্ষণে আমি আহ্লাদপূর্ব্বক শ্রীযুক্ত কেশবচন্দ্র ব্রহ্মানন্দকে কলিকাতার ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের আচার্য্যপদে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিতেছি।”

ব্রহ্মানন্দকে সম্বোধন করিয়া মহর্ষি বলিলেন—

“শ্রীমান্ কেশবচন্দ্র ! তুমি মহত্বার গ্রহণ করিতে প্রবৃত্ত হইয়াছ। আমি জানিতেছি যে তাহাতে তোমার দ্বারা এ ধর্ম্মের অশেষ উন্নতি হইবে। তুমি এই গুরুভার অপরাজিতচিত্ত হইয়া অহোরাত্র বহন করিবে। কিসে কলিকাতা ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ উন্নত হয়, কিসে ব্রাহ্মদিগের মনের মালিঙ্গ দূর হয়, এ প্রকার যত্ন করিবে। অগ্নি কোনও প্রচলিত ধর্ম্মের প্রতি ঘৃণা কি নিন্দাবাদ করিবে না, কিন্তু যাহাতে সকল ব্রাহ্মদিগের মধ্যে ঐক্যবন্ধন হয়, এমনত উপদেশ দিবে। আপনার আন্তরিক ভাব অকপট হৃদয়ে নির্ভয়ে ব্যক্ত করিবে, সদা নম্র স্বভাব



হইবে। বুদ্ধদিগকে সমাদর করিবে। যাহার যে প্রকার মর্যাদা তাহাকে সেই প্রকার মর্যাদা দিবে। তুমি যে কশ্ম্মে অগ্রসর হইয়াছ, এ অতি দুক্লহ কশ্ম্ম। কিন্তু অল্পবয়স্ক মনে করিয়া আপনাকে অবজ্ঞা করিও না। আমাদের ব্রাহ্মধর্মের প্রবর্তক মহাত্মা “রামমোহন রায় ধর্মের জন্ম ষোড়শ বৎসরে দেশত্যাগী হইয়াছিলেন। সেই ষোড়শ বৎসরে তিনি যে ভাব দ্বারা নীয়মান হইয়াছিলেন, সেই ভাব তাঁহার হৃদয়ে চিরদিনই ছিল। প্রথম বয়সে যাহারা ধর্মের জন্ম ত্যাগ স্বীকার করেন, তাঁহারা কদাপি অবসন্ন হন না। তুমি আপনার ইচ্ছার সহিত প্রাণ হৃদয় মন সকলি ঈশ্বরেতে সমর্পণ কর। না ধনের দ্বারা, না প্রজার দ্বারা, কিন্তু কেবল তাগের দ্বারাই তাঁহাকে লাভ করা যায়। ধর্মের জন্ম ত্যাগ স্বীকার করিতে ক্ষুদ্র হইবে না। কলিকাতার ব্রাহ্মদিগের হৃদয়ে ব্রাহ্মধর্মবীজ প্রাণপণে রোপণ করিবে।

“এক্গে তুমি আপনার আত্মাকে সেই অমৃতসাগরে নিমগ্ন কর। সেই জগতপ্রসবিতা পরমদেবতার বরণীয় শক্তি ধ্যান কর, যিনি আমাদের বুদ্ধিবৃত্তি সকল প্রেরণ করিতেছেন।

“ঈশ্বর তোমাকে এক্গে আপনার অমৃতসলিলে অভিষিক্ত করিতেছেন। তাঁহার আদেশে আমিও তোমাকে এই আচার্য্যপদে অভিষিক্ত করিতেছি। তুমি কলিকাতা ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের আচার্য্যপদ ধারণ করিয়া চতুর্দিকে শুভ ফল বিস্তার কর।

“এই ব্রাহ্ম-ধর্মগ্রন্থ গ্রহণ কর। যদিও হিমালয় চূর্ণ হইয়া ভূমিসাৎ হয়, তথাপি ইহার একাটমাত্র সত্য বিনষ্ট হইবে না। যদি দক্ষিণ-সাগর শুষ্ক হইয়া যায়, তথাপি ইহার একটি সত্যেরুও অত্যাধিক হইবে না। যে প্রকারে পূর্বে অগ্নিহোত্রীরা অগ্নিকে রক্ষা করিতেন,

তুমি এই ব্রাহ্মধর্মকে তদ্রূপ রক্ষা করিবে। হে ব্রাহ্মগণ! তোমরা অতীবধি এই কলিকাতার আচার্য্যের প্রতি অমুকুল হইয়া ইঁহার কথা শ্রদ্ধার সহিত গ্রহণ করিবে, তাহাতে ব্রাহ্মধর্মের অবশুই গৌরববৃদ্ধি হইবে।”

কিন্তু মহর্ষির সঙ্গে কেশবচন্দ্রের এই প্রগাঢ় স্নেহের সম্বন্ধ সবেও উভয়ের মধ্যে ক্রমে গুরুতর মতভেদ দাঁড়াইয়া গেল। মহর্ষি ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজকে কেবল একটা ধর্মসাধনের কেন্দ্র করিয়া রাখিতে চাহিয়া-ছিলেন, কিন্তু সমাজে কোনও প্রকারের সাংঘাতিক বিপ্লব আনয়ন করিতে চাহেন নাই। কেশবচন্দ্র এবং তাঁহার অনুচরেরা জীবনের সকল বিভাগে এই নূতন সাধনাকে ফুটাইয়া তুলিবার জন্ত অগ্রসর হইলেন। ইঁহারা সকলের আগে প্রচলিত জাতিভেদ তুলিয়া দিতে চান। জাতিভেদের চিহ্নস্বরূপ উপবীতধারণ এই সংস্কৃত ধর্মের বিরোধী বলিয়া ব্রাহ্মগণ ব্রাহ্মেরা উপবীত পরিত্যাগ করিতে আরম্ভ করেন। ১৮৬০ ইংরাজী সালে কেশবচন্দ্রের উদ্যোগে “সঙ্গত সভা” নামে একটি নূতন সভার প্রতিষ্ঠা হয়। এই সভাতে ব্রাহ্মদিগের ধর্ম-জীবন গঠন সম্বন্ধে সকল বিষয়ের আলোচনা হইত। এই আলোচ্য-বিষয়ের তালিকায় “উপাসনা, আত্ম-পরীক্ষা, আমোদ, নির্ভর, সত্য বাক্য, পৌত্তলিকতা, পবিত্রতা, কর্তব্যশ্রেণী, লোকভয়, ত্যাগস্বীকার” প্রভৃতি একুশটি বিষয়ের উল্লেখ আছে “সঙ্গতে”র কার্যাবিবরণে লেখা আছে :—

“যে কর্ম উচিত বলিয়া বোধ হইবে, তৎক্ষণাৎ তাহার অনুষ্ঠান করিতে হইবে, সকল আকর্ষণ অতিক্রম করিবে, সকল ত্যাগ স্বীকার করিবে, কোন যন্ত্রণাকে যন্ত্রণা বোধ করিবে না,” “যে ব্যক্তি এক

প্রকার হইয়া আপনাকে অল্পপ্রকার দেখায়, সেই আত্মাপহারী চৌর কর্তৃক কি পাপ কৃত না হয়,” “কেবল বাহ্য পৌত্তলিকতা যে ব্রাহ্মধর্ম নিষেধ করিতেছেন এমত নহে, ইহা পরিত্যাগ করাও সহজ, আধ্যাত্মিক পৌত্তলিকতা অতীব ভয়ানক। বিষয় সুখাভিলাষ, মানাকাজ্জা, কাম-ক্রোধ-লোভ-দেয়-ঈর্ষা প্রভৃতি মানসিক প্রবৃত্তি সকলের শরণাগত অনুগত দাস হইয়া তাহাদের সেবা ও উপাসনা করাকে আধ্যাত্মিক পৌত্তলিকতা বলে,” “স্বার্থপরতা হইতে মুক্ত হওয়াই সংসার হইতে মুক্ত হওয়া।”

এই সকল আলোচনার ফলে দলে দলে ব্রাহ্ম যুবকেরা প্রাচীন সমাজের সঙ্গে সকল প্রকারের সম্বন্ধ কাটিতে আরম্ভ করিলেন। অনেকে পরিবার পরিজন এবং বিষয় সম্পত্তি পরিত্যাগ করিয়া পথের ভিখারী হইতে লাগিলেন। কেহ কেহবা অশেষ প্রকারের শারীরিক নির্যাতন সহ্য করিতে আরম্ভ করিলেন। এতদিন পর্য্যন্ত ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ কেবল ব্যক্তিগত ভাবেই ব্রহ্মোপাসনা করিতেছিলেন। এখন অদম্য উৎসাহ সহকারে সমাজ-সংস্কারব্রত গ্রহণ করিলেন। স্ত্রী-শিক্ষা প্রচার, বিধবা বিবাহ এবং অসবর্ণ বিবাহ প্রচলন করিবার জন্ত যত্ন করিতে লাগিলেন। ইহাতে মহর্ষির প্রকৃতিগত রক্ষণশীলতাতে আঘাত পড়িল। প্রথম প্রথম কেশবচন্দ্রের প্রতি স্নেহপরবশ হইয়া তিনি নবীন ব্রাহ্মদিগের এ সকল সংস্কার চেষ্টা সহিয়া যাইতেছিলেন, কিন্তু ক্রমে আর সহিতে পারিলেন না। এতদিন পর্য্যন্ত ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের কার্যাদিতে মহর্ষির অনগ্রপ্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী একাধিপত্য ছিল। নবীন ব্রাহ্মেরা ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের কার্যকে ব্রাহ্মসাধারণে মতানুযায়ী পরিচালনা করিবার জন্ত এক ব্রাহ্ম-প্রতিনিধি সভার প্রতিষ্ঠা করিলেন। ছোট, বড়,

যুবক ও বৃদ্ধ ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে কার্য পরিচালনায় প্রত্যেক ব্রাহ্মের সমান অধিকার, এই গণতন্ত্র আদর্শের উপরে ইঁহারা ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজকে গড়িয়া তুলিবার জন্ত উদ্বৃত্ত হইলেন। মহর্ষির একাধিপত্য নষ্ট হইবার উপক্রম হইল। যে সকল ব্রাহ্ম কেবল ধর্মসাধনের ক্ষেত্রেই ব্রাহ্মধর্মকে আবদ্ধ রাখিতে চাহিয়াছিলেন, হিন্দু-সমাজের সঙ্গে কোনও প্রকারের বিরোধ বাধাইতে চাহেন নাই, তাঁহারা নবীন ব্রাহ্মদিগের উদ্বৃত্তে শঙ্কিত হইয়া উঠিলেন। মহর্ষির রক্ষণশীলতাকে আশ্রয় করিয়া ইঁহারা ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের একটা বিরোধের সৃষ্টি করিতে লাগিলেন। মহর্ষি ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের টাণ্ডি ছিলেন। কলিকাতার ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের সকল সম্পত্তি তাঁহার তত্ত্বাবধানেই গুপ্ত ছিল। টাণ্ডিরূপে ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের আচার্য্য ও অগ্ৰাণ্য কর্মচারী নিয়োগের অধিকার তাঁহার হাতেই ছিল। তিনি সে সকল অধিকার মাঝখানে ব্রাহ্ম-প্রতিনিধি সভার হাতেই ছাড়িয়া দিয়াছিলেন, এখন আবার সে অধিকার নিজের হাতে তুলিয়া লইলেন। উপবীতধারী ব্রাহ্মণ ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের আচার্য্য থাকিতে পারিবেন না, নবীন ব্রাহ্মেরা এই প্রস্তাব আনিলেন। মহর্ষি সম্পূর্ণভাবে ইহাতে সায় দিতে পারিলেন না। উপবীতধারী ব্রাহ্মণকে তিনি ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের অচার্য্যপদে বরণ করিলেন। ইহার ফলে কেশবচন্দ্র প্রমুখ নবীন ব্রাহ্মগণ আদি ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ হইতে সরিয়া পড়িয়া ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ নামে এক নূতন সমাজের প্রতিষ্ঠা করিলেন। কেশবচন্দ্রের নেতৃত্বাধীনে এই ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজই বাংলা দেশে একটা ধর্ম ও সমাজ সংস্কারের প্রবল চেষ্টা জাগাইয়া তুলেন।

মহর্ষির নেতৃত্বাধীনে আদি বা কলিকাতা ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রামটা ভাল করিয়া ফুটিয়া উঠে নাই। মহর্ষির চরিত্র, সাধনা

এবং বৈয়াকিক পদমর্থ্যাদার প্রভাবে সেখানে ব্যক্তিস্বাতন্ত্র্য ভাল করিয়া নাথা তুলিবার অবসর পায় নাই। মহর্ষিই ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের সমুদয় ব্যয়ভার বহন করিতেন। কখনও কখনও বিপন্ন ব্রাহ্মদিগকেও অন্ত্রাণে আবদ্ধ করিয়া রাখিতেন। এ সকল কারণে ব্যক্তিগত স্বাধীনতা সম্যক পরিমাণে আদি ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে প্রতিষ্ঠা লাভ করিতে পারে নাই। এমন কি ধর্মসাধনেও প্রত্যেক সাধকের স্বাধীন যুক্তিই যে সত্যাসত্য নির্দ্ধারণের একমাত্র কষ্টিপাথর, ইহাও ভাল করিয়া প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইতে পায় নাই। বেদাদি প্রাচীন শাস্ত্রের প্রামাণ্য বর্জন করিয়া মহর্ষি তাঁহার রচিত ব্রাহ্মধর্ম গ্রন্থখানিকে ব্রাহ্মসাধকদিগের শাস্ত্ররূপে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করেন। কেশবচন্দ্রকে ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের আচার্য্যপদে বরণ করিবার সময় মহর্ষি যে উপদেশ প্রদান করেন, তাহাতে ইহার স্পষ্ট প্রমাণ পাওয়া যায়।

“যদিও হিমালয় চূর্ণ হইয়া ভূমিসাৎ হয়, তথাপি ইহার (অর্থাৎ এই ব্রাহ্মধর্ম-গ্রন্থের) একটি মাত্র সত্য বিনষ্ট হইবে না। যদি দক্ষিণ সাগর শুষ্ক হইয়া যায় তথাপি ইহার একটি সত্যেরও অত্যাধা হইবে না।”

এখানেই মহর্ষি তাঁহার ব্রাহ্ম-ধর্মগ্রন্থকে কি চক্ষে দেখিতেন, ইহার পরিচয় পাওয়া যায়। ইহার দ্বারাও ব্যক্তিগত বুদ্ধি ও বিবেকের স্বাধীনতা অনেকটা সঙ্কুচিত হইয়াছিল। ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে এই ব্যক্তিস্বাতন্ত্র্য পরিপূর্ণরূপে প্রতিষ্ঠা লাভ করিল। এই ব্যক্তিস্বাতন্ত্র্যের আতিশয্যের প্রতি লক্ষ্য করিয়াই সে সময়ের খৃষ্টীয়ান পাদরী ডাইসন (Dyson) সাহেব কহিয়াছিলেন যে ব্রাহ্মধর্ম আর কিছুই নহে, কেবল Conjugation of the verb to think

মাত্র, অর্থাৎ I think; We think; Thou thinkest; You think; He thinks; They think—ইহারই নাম ব্রাহ্মধর্ম। এককথায় প্রত্যেক ব্যক্তির বিচার-বুদ্ধি ব্যতীত এই ধর্মের আর কোনও প্রামাণ্য নাই।

কথাটা সম্পূর্ণরূপেই সত্য ছিল বটে। কিন্তু যে কালে জগতের সকল ধর্মই মানুষের বিচার-বুদ্ধিকে শাস্ত্রের বন্ধনে একেবারে বাঁধিয়া রাখিয়াছিল, সে সময়ে ব্যক্তিগত বিচার-বুদ্ধির স্বাধীনতা প্রচার করা অত্যাবশ্যক হইয়া দাঁড়াইয়াছিল, ইহাও মানিতেই হইবে। এদেশে এই শাস্ত্রানুগত্যের ফলে ধর্মসাধনের সঙ্গে সাধকের আন্তরিক অমুভবের একটা বিরাট ব্যবধান প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইয়াছিল। এই ব্যবধান নিবন্ধন লৌকিক ধর্মের শক্তি ও সজীবতা নষ্ট হইয়া গিয়াছিল। ধর্ম মানুষকে মনুষ্যত্বের উচ্চতম শিখরে তোলা দূরে থাকুক, নানা দিক দিয়া মনুষ্যত্ব হইতে বঞ্চিতই করিতেছিল। একরূপ অবস্থায় ভারতবর্ষীয় ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ যে কাজটা করিতে উদ্বৃত্ত হন, তাহা অত্যাবশ্যক হইয়া পড়িয়াছিল সন্দেহ নাই।

কিন্তু এই ব্যক্তিস্বাতন্ত্র্য নবীন ব্রাহ্মদিগের জীবনে ধর্মকে কেবল একটা খেয়ালরূপেই গড়িয়া তুলে নাই, জীবনের সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ সাধ্যরূপেই প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিয়াছিল। ইঁহারা নিজে যাহা সত্য বলিয়া মনে করিতেন তাহার জন্ত প্রাণ পর্যাস্ত বিসর্জন দিতে সর্বদাই প্রস্তুত ছিলেন। কত দারিদ্র্য, কত নির্যাতন, আত্মীয় স্বজনবর্গের সঙ্গে কি দুর্কিয়হ বিচ্ছেদ-যাতনা, ইঁহাদিগকে নিজের মতবাদের জন্ত সহ্য করিতে হইয়াছিল, তাহা মনে করিলে এই সকল স্বাধীনতার সাধকের প্রতি অন্তর শ্রদ্ধাভরে অবনত হইয়া পড়ে। এ খেলা

ছিল না। ইঁ হারাই বাংলা দেশে স্বাধীনতার জন্ম অসাধারণ ত্যাগের শক্তি জাগাইয়া তুলেন।

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### ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ ও স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রাম—প্রথম অধ্যায়

ইংরাজী শিক্ষার ফলে বাংলার নব্যশিক্ষিত সমাজে যে স্বাধীনতার আদর্শ জাগিয়া উঠে, ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজই সর্বপ্রথমে সেই আদর্শকে জীবনের সকল ক্ষেত্রে সর্বতোভাবে গড়িয়া তুলিবার চেষ্টা করেন। এই কারণেই পঞ্চাশ বৎসর পূর্বে আমাদের মধ্যে ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের প্রভাব এতটা বাড়িয়া উঠিয়াছিল। ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের মতবাদ যে বেশী লোকে গ্রহণ করিয়াছিলেন, এমন নহে। ব্রাহ্মেরা যে পরমার্থসাধনের চেষ্টা করিতেছিলেন, দেশের শিক্ষিত সাধারণে সেই সাধনের মূলা ও মর্যাদা যে ভাল করিয়া বুঝিয়াছিলেন, একথাও বলা যায় না। ফলতঃ সে সময়ে আমাদের শিক্ষিত সমাজে অসংযত যুক্তিবাদ এবং মন্দেরবাদই বেশী প্রবল হইয়া উঠিয়াছিল। কেহ কেহ ঈশ্বরের অস্তিত্ব অস্বীকার করিতেন। ঈহারা এতটা বাড়াবাড়ি করিতেন না, তাঁহারাও উপাসনা ও প্রার্থনাদির আবশ্যকতা স্বীকার করিতেন না। ধর্মসম্বন্ধে অনেক লোকই নিতান্ত উদাসীন ছিলেন। এ অবস্থায় ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের বিশিষ্ট মতবাদের উপরে শিক্ষিত জনসাধারণের যে খুব একটা শ্রদ্ধা ছিল, এমন বলা যায় না। অথচ ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের প্রতি সাধারণভাবে

প্রায় সকল শিক্ষিত লোকেরই গভীর সহানুভূতি দেখা যাইত। আর এই সহানুভূতির মূল কারণ, ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের স্বাধীনতার আদর্শ।

মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথের সময়েই এই স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রাম আরম্ভ হয়। সেকালের ইংরাজীনবীশেরা হিন্দুধর্মের প্রচলিত ক্রিয়াকাণ্ডকে কুসংস্কার বলিয়া মনে করিতেন। দেবদেবীর উপাসনাকে এবং বিশেষভাবে প্রচলিত প্রতিমাপূজাকে মিথ্যা এবং মানুষের উন্নতির অন্তরায় বলিয়া বিশ্বাস করিতেন। এই সকল কুসংস্কারের জন্তই আমরা যুরোপীয়দিগের মতন সাংসারিক অভ্যাদয়সম্পন্ন হইয়া উঠিতে পারিতেছিলাম, অনেকেই এই ধারণা ছিল। এই সকল কুসংস্কারের জন্তই আমরা ছুনিয়ায় এতটা হেয় হইয়া রহিয়াছি, প্রায় সকল ইংরাজীনবীশই ইহা বিশ্বাস করিতেন। স্মরণ্য মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ যখন তথাকথিত পৌত্তলিকতার বিরুদ্ধে সংগ্রাম ঘোষণা করিলেন, তখন নব্যশিক্ষিতসমাজের নেতৃবৃন্দ প্রায় সকলেই তাঁহার পশ্চাতে যাইয়া দাঁড়াইলেন। মহর্ষি যখন ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের বেদী হইতে তাঁহার ব্রহ্মজ্ঞান ও ব্রহ্মোপাসনা প্রচার করিতে আরম্ভ করেন, তখন অল্পদিকে তাঁহার প্রতিষ্ঠিত ‘তত্ত্ববোধিনী’ পত্রিকার পৃষ্ঠায় অক্ষয়কুমার দত্ত মহাশয় অসাধারণ দক্ষতা সহকারে সে সময়ের যুরোপীয় যুক্তিবাদ এবং দার্শনিক চিন্তার প্রচারে প্রবৃত্ত হইলেন। অক্ষয়কুমার দত্ত নামে মাত্র ব্রাহ্ম ছিলেন। তাঁহার মনের ঝোঁক বৈজ্ঞানিক অজ্ঞেয়তাবাদের দিকেই বেশী ছিল। এই ঝোঁকটা ক্রমে অত্যন্ত বাড়িয়া উঠিলে মহর্ষির সঙ্গে তাঁহার প্রকাশ্য মতবিরোধ হয়। কিন্তু অক্ষয়কুমার দত্তের প্রবন্ধাবলীর জন্তই তত্ত্ববোধিনী পত্রিকা সে সময়ে শিক্ষিত ও চিন্তাশীল বাঙ্গালীর নিকটে এতটা আদরণীয় হইয়া উঠিয়াছিল।



পুণ্যশ্লোক বিজ্ঞানাগর, উদারমতি স্বারকানাথ বিজ্ঞানভূষণ প্রভৃতি সেকালের বাংলার শ্রেষ্ঠতম সাহিত্যরথী ও চিন্তানায়কেরা প্রায় সকলেই তত্ত্ববোধিনী এবং মহর্ষির ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের সঙ্গে স্বল্পবিস্তার ঘনিষ্ঠভাবে সংশ্লিষ্ট ছিলেন। তাঁহারা সকলেই প্রায় প্রচলিত হিন্দু-ধর্মের বিরুদ্ধে প্রকাশ্যভাবে না দাঁড়াইলেও ভিতরে ভিতরে অত্যন্ত প্রত্যক্ষবাদী ছিলেন। আর এই জন্মই ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের সঙ্গে তাঁহাদের এতটা সহানুভূতি জন্মিয়াছিল। কিন্তু মহর্ষির নেতৃত্বাধীনে স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রামটা কেবল আরম্ভ হয় মাত্র এই জন্ম যে সকল শিক্ষিত যুবকেরা স্বাধীনতার নামে মাতিয়া উঠিয়াছিলেন মহর্ষির ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ তাঁহাদিগকে প্রবলবেগে আকর্ষণ করিতে পারে নাই।

এই স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রাম পরিপূর্ণমাত্রায় বাধিয়া উঠে কেশবচন্দ্রের নেতৃত্বাধীনে। আর এই সংগ্রাম প্রথম বাধে ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের ভিতরেই মহর্ষি এবং কেশবচন্দ্র প্রমুখ নবীন ব্রাহ্মদিগের মধ্যে। তিন কারণে এই বিরোধটা বাধে। প্রথম, মহর্ষির ধর্মসাধনের সঙ্কীর্ণতা, দ্বিতীয়, মহর্ষির ধর্মমতের একদেশদর্শিতা, তৃতীয়, ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের কার্য পরিচালনায় মহর্ষির একতন্ত্রতা বা অটোক্রাশী (autocracy)। মহর্ষি ব্রাহ্মধর্মকে কেবল ব্রহ্মোপাসনার মধ্যেই কার্যাতঃ আবদ্ধ রাখিয়াছিলেন। ব্রাহ্ম-মতবাদকে জীবনের সকল কর্মে এবং সকল সম্বন্ধের মধ্যে গড়িয়া তুলিতে হইবে, এ ভাবটা তখনও ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে প্রবল হয় নাই। কেশবচন্দ্র এবং তাঁহার বহুগণ ব্রাহ্মমতবাদের আদর্শে ব্রাহ্মদিগের জীবন গড়িয়া তুলিবার জন্ম ব্যগ্র হইয়া উঠিলেন। তাঁহারা কহিলেন, ব্রাহ্ম-মন্দিরে আসিয়া ব্রহ্মোপাসনার সময়ে এককথা কহিব, এক ভাবের অঙ্গুলীলন করিব, মনে মনে এ আদর্শের ধ্যান করিব, আর মন্দির হইতে

ফিরিয়া বাড়ী যাইয়া পরিবারে এবং সমাজে অন্তরূপ আচার আচরণ করিব, ইহা সম্ভব নহে। ইহাতে সত্যের প্রতি সম্যক মর্যাদা প্রকাশ হয় না। যাহা সত্য বুঝিব তাহা জীবনের সর্ববিধ ব্যাপারে মানিয়া চলিব। অন্তরের ধর্মবুদ্ধির বা বিবেক বা conscience অনুযায়ী সমগ্র জীবনকে গড়িয়া তুলিতে হইবে, ইহাই ব্রাহ্মধর্মের সত্য আদর্শ। এই লইয়াই মহর্ষির সঙ্গে তাঁহাদের বিরোধ বাধে। কেশবচন্দ্র এই বিরোধ সম্বন্ধে তাঁহার ইংরাজী পাক্ষিক ‘ইণ্ডিয়ান মিররে’ লেখেন যে ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের প্রথম যুদ্ধ হইয়াছিল একেশ্বরবাদের যুদ্ধ। এই সংগ্রামে প্রথমে রামমোহন এবং পরে দেবেন্দ্রনাথই সেনানায়ক ছিলেন। ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের “দ্বিতীয় যুদ্ধ বিবেকের যুদ্ধ।” বিবেকের প্রাধান্য প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিবার জন্তই।

“সঙ্গীর্ণ ভ্রাতৃমণ্ডলীর মধ্যে বিচ্ছেদ উপস্থিত হইল।...পুরাতন অভ্যস্ত ভাবের সহিত নূতন নূতন ভাবের বিরোধ হইতে লাগিল। এই ক্ষুদ্র দলের মধ্যে অধিকাংশ কেবল ব্রহ্মজ্ঞান লইয়াই সন্তুষ্ট রহিলেন; কিন্তু কয়েকজন সেই জ্ঞান জীবনে পরিণত করিবার জন্ত দৃঢ়প্রতিজ্ঞ এবং ব্যাকুল হইলেন। তাঁহারা বলিলেন, কেবল সপ্তাহান্তে একবার সামাজিকভাবে ব্রহ্মোপাসনা করিলে হইবে না; কিন্তু প্রতিদিনের জীবনে আপন বিশ্বাস অনুসারে কর্তব্যানুষ্ঠান করিয়া ঈশ্বরের ইচ্ছা পূর্ণ করিতে হইবে।...ঈশ্বরের অভিপ্রায় অথবা বিবেকের পরামর্শ ভিন্ন কোনও কার্য করা উচিত নহে। জীবনের ক্ষুদ্রতম কার্য সকলও বিবেকের অনুমোদিত হওয়া উচিত। প্রথমোক্ত ব্রহ্মবাদিগণ জীবনপথে এতদূর অগ্রসর হইতে সম্মত হইলেন না, তাঁহারা বিবেকবাদীদিগের বিরোধী হইয়া উঠিলেন।”

এই বিরোধের দ্বিতীয় কারণ, মহর্ষির ধর্মের আদর্শের সঙ্গীর্ণতা । মহর্ষি ব্রাহ্মধর্মকে হিন্দুধর্মেরই অন্তর্ভুক্ত করিয়া রাখিতে চেষ্টা করেন । ব্রাহ্মধর্ম কোনও বিশেষ ধর্মশাস্ত্রকে ঈশ্বর প্রণীত কিম্বা ধর্মের একমাত্র প্রামাণ্য গ্রন্থ বলিয়া স্বীকার করেন না । সত্য ভিন্ন এই ধর্মের অগ্র কোনও প্রামাণ্য নাই । যে শাস্ত্রে যতটুকু সত্য আছে, তাহাই ব্রাহ্মধর্ম । তাহাকেই মাথা পাতিয়া বরণ করিয়া লইতে হইবে । কিন্তু কার্য্যতঃ মহর্ষির ব্রাহ্মধর্ম হিন্দুশাস্ত্র ভিন্ন অগ্র কোনও শাস্ত্র স্পর্শ করে না । নবীন ব্রাহ্মেরা এই সঙ্গীর্ণতারও প্রতিবাদ করেন । ইহাও মহর্ষির সঙ্গে তাঁহাদের বিরোধের একটা কারণ হইয়া উঠে ।

বিরোধের তৃতীয় কারণ, ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের কার্য্যপরিচালনায় মহর্ষির অনগ্রপ্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী একাধিপত্য । মহর্ষি ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের গৃহের ও অগ্রাগ্র সম্পত্তির ‘ট্রাষ্টি’ ছিলেন । ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের ‘ট্রাষ্টি’ পত্র অল্পসারে ‘ট্রাষ্টি’ হিসাবে মহর্ষির উপরেই সমাজের কর্ম্মচারী নিয়োগের ভার গুস্ত ছিল । ব্রাহ্মসাধারণের এ সকল বিষয়ে আইনতঃ কোনও অধিকার ছিল না । কিন্তু বিরোধ বাধিবার পূর্বে কেশবচন্দ্রের প্ররোচনায় মহর্ষি ব্রাহ্ম-সাধারণের প্রতিনিধি সভা গঠন করিয়া, তাহারই হস্তে ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের সকল কার্য্যভার অর্পণ করেন । বিরোধের সূত্রপাত হইলে তিনি প্রাচীন ব্রাহ্মদিগের পরামর্শে নবীন ব্রাহ্মদিগের এই অধিকার কাড়িয়া লইয়া ট্রাষ্টিরূপে ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের সকল কর্তৃত্ব নিজের হাতে গ্রহণ করেন । মহর্ষির এই একতন্ত্রতা বিরোধের তৃতীয় কারণ হইয়া উঠে । কেশব-চন্দ্র লিখিয়াছেন :—

“বাহিরে দেখিতে কলিকাতা ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের কর্তৃপক্ষীয়েরা সমাজ-গৃহের ট্রাষ্টি মাত্র । কিন্তু ভিতরে ভিতরে তাঁহারা সমুদয় ব্রাহ্মমণ্ডীর

অধ্যক্ষ ও নিয়ামক। মানবাত্মাগুলিকে শাসনাধীন করিবার জন্য তাঁহারা রাজবিধি-গঠিত কর্তৃত্ব অবলম্বন করিয়াছেন। এরূপ ব্যাপার আমাদের বিবেকের নিকট অতি উদ্বেগকর।...সাধারণে আর এরূপ ভাব এখন সহ্য করিতে পারেন না। এখন পৃথিবীর সকল লোককে আমাদের বোঝান প্রয়োজন হইয়াছে যে কলিকাতাসমাজ বর্তমান অবস্থায় মণ্ডলীর মত প্রকাশ করে না। উহা এখন জনকয়েক ব্যক্তির মাত্র। যে অস্ত্রে উহা আপনাকে গঠন করিয়া তুলিয়াছে, সেই অস্ত্রেই এখন আমরা উহাকে ভগ্ন করিব।...একপক্ষের একাধিপত্য অল্প পক্ষের শৃঙ্খলমুক্ত হইবার কারণ হইয়া থাকে।...”

কেশবচন্দ্র এইরূপে তিনটি প্রবন্ধ লিখিয়া বাংলার শিক্ষিত সাধারণের দরবারে আত্মপক্ষ সমর্থন করেন। দ্বিতীয় প্রবন্ধে তিনি যে “কলিকাতাসমাজ (আমরা এখন যাহাকে আদিসমাজ কহি, আদিতে তাহাই কলিকাতাসমাজ নামে অভিহিত ছিল) মানবের ভ্রাতৃত্বের আদর্শকে একটা কথার কথায় পরিণত করিয়াছে।” বিরোধের সকল কারণগুলির সমাহার করিয়া উপসংহারে কেশবচন্দ্র কহেন :—

“কলিকাতাসমাজ এইরূপে ঈশ্বরের ধর্মকে সংসারের ধর্ম করিয়াছেন; সমগ্র মানবজাতির উদার ধর্মকে সাম্প্রদায়িক হিন্দুধর্ম করিয়াছেন; বিবেকের স্থলে ফলাফলচিন্তা, বীরত্ব ও ঐকান্তিকতার স্থলে চাঞ্চল্য, ভীকৃত্য ও কপটতাকে স্থান দান করিয়াছেন; সত্যকে সংসারের দাস করিয়াছেন, এবং ঈশ্বরের মন্দিরে ঈশ্বরের নামে ধনের সম্মানার্থ বেদী স্থাপন করিয়াছেন। কলিকাতাসমাজের এখনই সাবধান হইয়া এ সকলের জ্ঞাত প্রায়শ্চিত্ত করা সমুচিত, অত্যাধা মহা বিপ্লব

ঘটিবে। সত্যকে কখনও কেহ দাসত্বে বদ্ধ করিয়া রাখিতে সমর্থ হইবে না, উহা সমুদয় শৃঙ্খল ভগ্ন করিয়া স্বাধীন হইবেই হইবে।”

কেবল ব্রাহ্মদিগের ধর্মসাধন বা ধর্মসিদ্ধান্ত লইয়া এই বিরোধ উপস্থিত হইলে নব্যশিক্ষিত সম্প্রদায়ের এই বিরোধের ফলাফলেতে কোনও স্বার্থ থাকিত না। তাঁহারা এ বিষয়ে কিঞ্চিৎমাত্রও মনোনিবেশ করিতেন না। আর এই সংগ্রামের সেনাপতিরূপে কেশবচন্দ্রও তাঁহাদের চিন্তকে অধিকার করিয়া বসিতে পারিতেন না। ক্ষুদ্র সংখ্যক ব্রাহ্মেরা ইহাকে একটা ধর্মসংগ্রাম বলিয়া মনে করিলেও, দেশের শিক্ষিত সাধারণে এ বিবাদকে স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রাম বলিয়াই গ্রহণ করেন। কেশবচন্দ্র নিজেও ইহাকে স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রাম বলিয়াই প্রচার করেন। মহর্ষির দল ছাড়িয়া যাইয়া কেশবচন্দ্র স্বপক্ষে লোকমত গঠনের জন্ত ইংরাজীতে ‘ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রাম’ এই নাম দিয়া এক সুদীর্ঘ বক্তৃতা দান করেন। এই বক্তৃতায় কোনও কোনও খৃষ্টীয়ান পাদরী উপস্থিত ছিলেন। সেকালের শিক্ষিত বাঙ্গালী সমাজের নেতৃস্থানীয় দুইজন মহাপুরুষের নামও বক্তৃতার বিবরণে দেখিতে পাওয়া যায়। ইহাদের একজন দিগম্বর মিত্র, অপর মহেন্দ্র লাল সরকার। ইহারা কেহই ব্রাহ্ম ছিলেন না। ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের মত বিরোধে ইহাদের কোনই ইষ্টানিষ্ট ছিল না। কিন্তু সেকালের শিক্ষিত বাঙ্গালীরা সকলেই যেমন দেশ প্রচলিত কুসংস্কার এবং সমাজানুগত্যের বিরোধী ছিলেন, ইহারাও সেইরূপ স্বজাতির কল্যাণ কামনায় যাহাতে সত্য ও স্বাধীনতার পরিপন্থী যাবতীয় রীতিনীতি ও সংস্কার নষ্ট হয় সর্বাস্তঃকরণে তাহাই চাহিয়াছিলেন। সরকার মহাশয় ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে যোগ না দিয়াও জীবনের শেষ দিন পর্য্যন্ত

স্বদেশবাসীর চিন্তা ও চরিত্রকে সত্য ও স্বাধীনতার পথে পরিচালিত করিবার জন্ত চেষ্টা করেন। মিত্র মহাশয়ও অল্প দিকে ব্রিটিশ ইণ্ডিয়ান এসোসিয়েসনের অন্যতম অধিনায়করূপে পরজীবনে রাষ্ট্রীয় ক্ষেত্রে স্বদেশীয়দিগের অধিকার বিস্তারের জন্য যথাসাধ্য চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন। ইঁহারা উভয়েই নিজ নিজ ভাবে স্বাধীনতার উপাসক ছিলেন। আর এই জন্তই ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের ভিতরে যখন এই স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রাম বাধিয়া উঠিল তখন দেশের শিক্ষিত সাধারণের সঙ্গে ইঁহারাও কেশবচন্দ্রের পক্ষ সমর্থন করেন।

ফলতঃ সে সময়ে কেশবচন্দ্র সর্বতোভাবেই বাঙ্গালীর চিন্তা ও চরিত্রকে স্বাধীন ও উদার করিবার জন্য প্রাণপণ চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন। ১৮৬৬ ইংরাজীর নভেম্বর মাসে নবীন ব্রাহ্মদিগের সঙ্গে মিলিত হইয়া কেশবচন্দ্র ভারতবর্ষীয়-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ নাম দিয়া এক নুতন সমাজের প্রতিষ্ঠা করেন। এই ভারতবর্ষীয়-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজই সে সময়ে শিক্ষিত বাঙ্গালীর স্বাধীনতার আদর্শকে সাকার করিয়া তুলিবার চেষ্টা করেন। ভারতবর্ষীয়-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ কতকগুলি বিস্তুদ্ধ মতবাদ গ্রহণ ও প্রচার করিয়াই ক্ষান্ত থাকেন নাই। সাধন ভজনকেই ধর্ম্মিকের একমাত্র কর্তব্য বলিয়া স্বীকার করেন নাই। নিজের মত ও বিশ্বাস অনুযায়ী চরিত্র গড়িয়া তোলা, এবং পরিবারের এবং সমাজের সকল সম্বন্ধকেই নিয়মিত করা, ইহাই তাঁহারা ধর্ম্মের প্রকৃত লক্ষ্য বলিয়া গ্রহণ করেন। এই সর্বাঙ্গীন ধর্ম্মের মূলমন্ত্র হইল, সত্য ও স্বাধীনতা। নিজের বিচার বুদ্ধিতে যাহা সত্য বলিয়া মনে হয়, প্রাণ পাত করিয়াও তাহার অনুসরণ করিতে হইবে। এ বিষয়ে না কোনও গ্রন্থের, না কোনও পুরোহিত সম্প্রদায়ের, না সমাজের—অধীনতা স্বীকার করিলে চলিবে

না, তাহাতে ধ্বংসহানি হইবে। ইহাই কেশবচন্দ্রের নূতন ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের মূলমন্ত্র হইল। এই মূলমন্ত্র স্বাধীনতার মন্ত্র। এইজন্তই বহুতর শিক্ষিত বাঙ্গালী এবং ভারতবাসী ব্রাহ্মমতবাদ বা ব্রাহ্মসাধন গ্রহণ না করিয়াও সে সময়ে ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের প্রতি অত্যন্ত অনুরক্ত হইয়া পড়েন। এইভাবে সেকালের শিক্ষিত লোকমাঝেই ব্রাহ্মভাবাপন্ন ছিলেন।

কেশবচন্দ্র ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের বাহিরেও এই সংগ্রাম ঘোষণা করেন। প্রকাশ্যভাবে তিনি রাষ্ট্রীয় স্বাধীনতার জন্ত চেষ্টা করেন নাই, কিন্তু নানা দিক দিয়া অপরোক্ষভাবে স্বদেশের আত্মমর্যাদা বোধ জাগাইয়া তুলেন। প্রথমতঃ তাঁহার অলোকসামান্য মনীষা এবং বাগ্মিতা দেশের লোকের হীনতা-বোধ নষ্ট করিয়া দেয়। সেকালে ইংরাজী বিজ্ঞারই একাধিপত্য ছিল। ইংরাজী বিজ্ঞায় প্রতিষ্ঠালাভ করিলেই বিদ্বান ও জ্ঞানী বলিয়া লোকসমাজে সমাদর পাওয়া যাইত। কেশবচন্দ্র এই বিজ্ঞায় অসাধারণ কৃতিত্ব প্রকাশ করেন। তাঁহার মনীষা এবং বাগ্মিতা ইংরাজ-সমাজকে পর্য্যন্ত বিস্মিত করিয়া তুলে। ইংরাজী ভাষার উপরে কেশবচন্দ্রের যে পরিমাণে দখল ছিল, অনেক কৃতবিদ্ব জ্ঞানজ্ঞেরও সে দখল ছিল না। দেশের শীর্ষস্থানীয় রাজপুরুষেরা পর্য্যন্ত কেশবচন্দ্রের বিজ্ঞাবত্তা ও বাগ্মিতায় মন্ত্রমুগ্ধের মতন হইয়া যাইতেন। এ সকল দেখিয়া শুনিয়া বাঙ্গালীর আত্মগৌরববোধ জাগিয়া উঠিল। আত্মগৌরববোধেই দেশাত্মবোধের প্রথম সূচনা হয়। কেশবচন্দ্র রাষ্ট্রীয় আন্দোলনের নায়ক না হইয়াও, এই দেশাত্মবোধকে সে সময়ে বিশেষভাবে জাগাইয়া তুলেন।

ভারতবর্ষীয়-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের প্রতিষ্ঠার মাস কয়েক পূর্বে কলিকাতার

মেডিক্যাল কলেজ-থিয়েটারে কেশবচন্দ্র ‘যিশুখৃষ্ট—য়ুরোপ ও এশিয়া’ এই নাম দিয়া এক ইংরাজী বক্তৃতা করেন। এই এক বক্তৃতাতেই দেশের চিন্তানায়কস্বে তিনি প্রতিষ্ঠা লাভ করিয়াছেন। এই বক্তৃতার মূলকথা ছিল দুটি। এক, তোমরা যাহারা খৃষ্টান বলিয়া পরিচয় দাও, তাহারা অনেকেই যিশুখৃষ্টের চরিত্রের অনুশীলন কর না। যিশুখৃষ্টের শিক্ষা তোমাদের চরিত্রে ফলিয়া উঠে নাই। দ্বিতীয় কথা, যিশুখৃষ্ট এশিয়ার লোক ছিলেন। এশিয়ার সাধনা এবং সভ্যতার মূলগত বিনয়, সহিষ্ণুতা, সর্বজীবে মৈত্রী এবং আধ্যাত্মিকতার উপরেই যিশুখৃষ্টের জীবনের ও ধর্মের পুচ্ছপ্রতিষ্ঠা। এ সকল আদর্শ প্রবল য়ুরোপীয় জাতিদিগের মধ্যে ভাল করিয়া ছুটিবার অবসর পায় নাই। যিশুখৃষ্টকে বুঝিতে হইলে এশিয়ার সভ্যতা ও সাধনার প্রতি শ্রদ্ধালাভ করিতে হইবে। এশিয়াকে য়ুগের চক্ষে দেখিলে যিশুখৃষ্টের জীবন ও চরিত্রের প্রতি মর্যাদা দেখান হয় না। এই বক্তৃতা দিয়া কেশবচন্দ্র কেবল ভারতবাসীদিগের নহে, কিন্তু ইংরাজেরও শিক্ষকের আসন গ্রহণ করিলেন। ইতিপূর্বে এভাবে কোনও বাঙ্গালী দেশের রাজপুরুষদিগকে ধর্ম ও নীতি শিক্ষা দিতে অগ্রসর হন নাই। আর যে ভাবে কেশবচন্দ্র এই বক্তৃতাটি দেন, তাহাতে ইংরাজ খৃষ্টীয়ানেরা ভিতরে ভিতরে বাঙ্গালীর মুখে এ সকল কথা শুনিয়া যতটাই অবমাননা বোধ করুন না কেন, মুখ ফুটিয়া তাহা বলিবার উপায় ছিল না।

সমসাময়িক ঘটনার আলোচনা করিলে মনে হয় যে কেশবচন্দ্র স্বজাতির সম্মান রক্ষা করিবার জন্তই এই বক্তৃতা দিতে উদ্বৃত্ত হন। ইহার কিছুদিন পূর্বে আর, স্কট মনক্রীফ্ নামে এক বিলাতী সওদাগর বাঙ্গালী চরিত্রের উপরে অযথা আক্রমণ করিয়া এক বক্তৃতা দেন।



এই বক্তৃতাতে তিনি বাঙ্গালী পুরুষদিগকেই শঠ, জুয়াচোর ও প্রবঞ্চক বলিয়া ক্ষান্ত রহেন নাই, আমাদের দেশের মহিলাদিগের উপরেও অকথ্য অক্রমণ করেন। ইহার ফলে স্বদেশীয় ও বিদেশীয়দিগের মধ্যে ঘোরতর বিদ্বেষ জলিয়া ওঠে। উভয় পক্ষের সংবাদ পত্রের সাহায্যে এই আগুন দেশময় ছড়াইয়া পড়ে। কেশবচন্দ্র মনক্ৰীফের বক্তৃতাকে লক্ষ্য করিয়াই তাঁর এই বক্তৃতা প্রদান করেন। কিন্তু এমন স্খচতুর-ভাবে এই কাজটি করেন যে মনক্ৰীফের পক্ষের লোকেরা তাহার কথার প্রতিবাদ করিবার সূচ্যগ্র পরিমাণেও অবসর পায় নাই। ‘তোমরা খৃষ্টীয়ান, যিশুখৃষ্টের আদর্শ অবশ্যই মান; এস তবে যিশুখৃষ্টের চরিত্রের ও উপদেশের তৌলদণ্ডে চড়াইয়া তোমাদের ও আমার স্বদেশীয়দিগের চরিত্রের ওজন করি।’ কেশবচন্দ্র কার্যাতঃ এই ভাবেই এই বক্তৃতা দান করেন। এদেশের দেশীয় ও ইংরাজদিগের মধ্যে কিরূপ সম্বন্ধ প্রতিষ্ঠিত হওয়া উচিত, এই কথার অবতারণা করিতে যাইয়া তিনি কহিলেন—

“In handling this rather delicate part of my subject, I must avoid all party spirit and race antagonism. I stand on the platform of brotherhood and disclaim the remotest intention of offending any particular class or sect of those who constitute my audience, by indulging in rabid and malicious denunciation on the one hand and dishonest flattery on the other.

অর্থাৎ এই বিষয়ের আলোচনায় প্রবৃত্ত হইয়া আমি কোনও সম্প্রদায়ের বা জাতির পক্ষে ওকালতী করিব না। মানবের নিখিল

ব্রাহ্মণের মঞ্চ হইতেই আমি ইহার বিচার করিব। কোনও জাতির অযথা নিন্দা করিব না, কাহারও তোষামদও করিব না। দোষ গুণ উভয় পক্ষেরই আছে, ইংরাজেরও আছে, এদেশীয়দিগেরও আছে। মনক্রীফ্ সাহেবের বক্তৃতার নাম না করিয়া তাঁহার বক্তৃতার প্রতি লক্ষ্য করিয়া কহিলেন যে, এ দেশের যুরোপীয় সমাজে এক শ্রেণীর লোক আছে, যারা দেশীয় লোকদিগকে সর্বাস্তঃকরণে ঘৃণাই যে করে তাহা নহে, এরূপ ঘৃণা করাতে আনন্দ পায়। ইহারা এদেশের লোককে শৃগালের সঙ্গে তুলনা করে। সে শৃগাল হইয়া জন্মিয়াছে, শৃগালের শিক্ষাই পাইয়াছে, শৃগালের মতই জীবন যাপন করে এবং মরে, অতএব ( *As a fox a native should always be distrusted, and treated with contempt and hatred.* ) এদেশের লোকেও ইংরাজকে ছাড়িয়া কথা কহে না। তারা বলে, ইংরাজ নেকড়ে বাঘের মতন হিংস্র, প্রতিহিংসাপরায়ণ ও শোণিতলোলুপ। ইংরাজ নেকড়ে বাঘ হইয়াই জন্মিয়াছে, নেকড়ে বাঘের শিক্ষাই পাইয়াছে, নেকড়ে বাঘের মতই জীবন যাপন করিবে এবং মরিবে। বিনয়, ক্রমা এবং মৈত্রীধর্ম সে জানে না। অল্পেতেই সে ক্রোধে জলিয়া ওঠে এবং—*Once out of temper he rants and raves, and inflicts the most cruel and barbarous torture on his enemy to gratify his ire and is even some times so far carried away by his passions as to commit the most atrocious murder.* অতএব নেকড়ে বাঘকে যেমন লোকে ভয় করে এবং দূরে পরিহার করে সেইরূপ ইংরাজকেও পরিহার করিতে হয়। এদেশের লোকেরা ইংরাজকে যে ভয় করে তাহা ইংরাজের উন্নত

চরিত্রের প্রভাবে নহে, কিন্তু তাহার পশুত্ব দেখিয়া This fear, be it said, is not the fear due to a superior nature but that which brutal ferocity awakes. তারপর স্বদেশবাগীর চরিত্রের বিশ্লেষণ করিয়া কহিলেন, মিথ্যা প্রবঞ্চনা জাল জুয়াচুরী আমাদের মধ্যে আছে সত্য, কিন্তু ইহা আমাদের প্রকৃতিগত নহে, আমরা যে অবস্থায় পড়িয়াছি তাহারই ফল। আমাদের দেশের লোক বড় স্বার্থপর, ক্ষুদ্র স্বার্থের লোভেই তাহাদের জীবন পরিচালিত হয়। এই স্বার্থের প্রেরণাতেই তাহারা মিথ্যা প্রবঞ্চনা প্রভৃতি অবলম্বন করে, আর বহু শতাব্দীর পরাধীনতাই আমাদের একরূপ সঙ্কীর্ণ ও নীচ করিয়া তুলিয়াছে।

We are a subject race and have been so for centuries. We have too long been under foreign sway to feel anything like independence in our hearts. Socially and religiously we are little better than slaves.....under such circumstances all the higher impulses and aspirations of the soul must naturally be smothered, and hence it is that though educated ideas rebel, and organised communities of enlightened men often protest, the general tenor of native life is a dead level of base and unmanly acquiescence in traditional errors."

বিগত পঞ্চাশ বৎসর ধরিয়া বাঙ্গালী যে স্বাধীনতামন্ত্র সাধন করিয়া আসিয়াছে, বলিতে গেলে কেশবচন্দ্রই সেই মন্ত্রের একরূপ প্রথম দীক্ষাগুরু। জাতীয় স্বাধীনতা জগতের সর্বত্রই ব্যক্তিগত স্বাধীনতার

উপরে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইয়াছে। হিউজিয়নটদের সাধনে ও স্বার্থ ত্যাগেই ফরাশীদের স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রামের সূত্রপাত হয়। ইংলণ্ডেও পিউরিটানদিগের সাধন এবং আত্মবিসর্জনের উপরেই রাষ্ট্রীয় স্বাধীনতার ভিত্তি গড়িয়া উঠে। আমেরিকার স্বাধীনতার মূলেও হিউজিয়নট এবং পিউরিটানদিগের সাধন দেখিতে পাই। আমাদের সমকালে রুশের রাষ্ট্রীয় স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রাম ও বহুলপরিমাণে টলষ্টয়ের শিক্ষা এবং আদর্শকে আশ্রয় করিয়াই জাগিয়া উঠে। যেখানেই জাতীয় স্বাধীনতার প্রচেষ্টা হইয়াছে, সেইখানেই তাহার গোড়ায় একটা ধর্মের প্রেরণা জাগিয়াছে। এবং এই ধর্মের প্রেরণায় মানুষ আগে ভিতরের বাঁধন কাটিয়াছে, নিজের চিন্তা ও চিত্তকে বাহিরের বন্ধনমুক্ত করিয়াছে, পরিবারে ও সমাজে এই স্বাধীনতার আদর্শকে গড়িয়া তুলিতে গিয়াছে, এবং পরিণামে এই ব্যক্তিগত স্বাধীনতার স্মৃদুত ভিত্তির উপরেই নিজের রাষ্ট্রের স্বাধীনতা প্রতিষ্ঠা করিবার জন্ম অগ্রসর হইয়াছে। ভিতরে যে দাস, বাহিরে সে স্বাধীন হইতে পারে না। পরিবারে এবং সমাজে যে আপনার বিচারবুদ্ধি এবং বিশ্বাস অনুসারে চলিতে ভয় পায়, সে কখনও নির্ভীক হইয়া একতন্ত্র রাজশক্তির সম্মুখীন হইতে পারে না। কেবল সাংসারিক সুখ স্তুবিধা যেখানে জাতীয় বা রাষ্ট্রীয় স্বাধীনতার মূল প্রেরণা হইয়া রহে, সেখানে এই স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রাম কদাপি জয়যুক্ত হইতে পারে না। যেখানে জয়যুক্ত হয়, সেখানে দেশের জনসাধারণে এক অধীনতা হইতে মুক্তিলাভ করিয়া অপর অধীনতাতে যাইয়া পড়ে, 'স্ব'য়ের উপরে দাঁড়াইতে পারে না। আমাদের বর্তমান রাষ্ট্রীয় স্বাধীনতার প্রচেষ্টা যে পরিমাণে ব্যক্তিগত স্বাধীনতার আদর্শের প্রেরণা লাভ করিয়াছে, সেই পরিমাণেই তাহা বিপুল, উদার এবং অপরাজেয় হইয়াছে এবং

হইতেছে। এই দিক দিয়া ভারতের বিশেষতঃ বাংলার বর্তমান স্বাধীনতার আন্দোলনের ইতিহাস আলোচনা করিলে, ইহার মূলে একরূপ প্রথম শিক্ষা ও দীক্ষাগুরুরূপে কেশবচন্দ্র এবং তাঁহার প্রতিষ্ঠিত ভারতবর্ষীয়-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজকে দেখিতে পাই।

কেশবচন্দ্র বা ভারতবর্ষীয়-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ সাক্ষাৎভাবে রাষ্ট্রীয় পরাধীনতার শৃঙ্খল ভাঙ্গিতে চেষ্টা করেন নাই, একথা সত্য। কিন্তু সে সময়ে রাষ্ট্রীয় বন্ধনের বেদনাও লোকে অনুভব করিতে আরম্ভ করে নাই। বন্ধনের বেদনা যেখানে নাই, মুক্তির বাসনাও সেখানে জাগে না। পঞ্চাশ বৎসর পূর্বে ইংরাজের শৃঙ্খল আমাদের গলায় বাধে নাই। প্রচলিত হিন্দুধর্মের কর্মকাণ্ডে এবং জাতিভেদের উপরে প্রতিষ্ঠিত ও ভ্রোংমার্গচারী সমাজের কঠোর রজ্জুটাই আমাদের গলায় এবং হাতে ও পায়ে বড়ই বাজিয়া উঠিয়াছিল। এইখানেই বন্ধনের বেদনা জাগিয়াছিল। পৌরাণিক দেবদেবীতে বিশ্বাস নাই, অথচ তাহাদিগের নিকটে মাথা নোঁয়াইতে হইত, ব্রাহ্মণের অতিপ্রাকৃত অধিকারে আস্থা ছিল না, অথচ পরিবারের শাসন ভয়ে পূজাপার্কণে শ্রদ্ধাশাস্তিতে বামুন ডাকিয়া মন্ত্র পড়িতে হইত। সংস্কৃতজ্ঞান বা শাস্ত্রজ্ঞান তখনও জন্মে নাই, স্মরণ না পুরোহিতের, না যজমানের, কাহারও মন্দের অর্থবোধ ছিল না, অথচ টিয়াপাখীর মতন এ সকল অর্থশূন্য শব্দ আবৃত্তি করিতে হইত। এই সকল ব্যাপারে বিচার বুদ্ধিতে আঘাত লাগিত। এই আঘাতের তাড়নাতেই মন বিদ্রোহী হইয়া উঠে। ষাঁহার সমাজ ভয়ে এ সকল অনুষ্ঠান করিতেন, তাঁহারও মনে মনে অতিষ্ঠ হইয়া উঠিয়াছিলেন। সত্যধর্মের প্রেরণা বিশ্বাস ও ভক্তি। বিশ্বাস বিচার বুদ্ধির দ্বারা সমর্থিত হইলেই সত্য

ও শক্তিশালী হয়। এখানে তাহা হইত না। সমাজে জাতিভেদ মানিয়া চনিতে হইত। অথচ নব্যশিক্ষিত লোকেরা কিছুতেই বিচার-যুক্তি কিম্বা নিজেদের ধর্মবুদ্ধি দ্বারা এই কৃত্রিম সামাজিক ভেদবাদকে সত্য বা কল্যাণকর বলিয়া মানিয়া লইতে পারিতেন না। এই জাতিভেদ মানিতে বাইয়াও তাঁহাদের অন্তরে গুরুতর আঘাত লাগিত। যাহারা মানিতেন তাঁহারাও নিজের কাছে নিজে অত্যন্ত খাটো হইয়া থাকিতেন। আর নিজের কাছে নিজে খাটো হইয়া থাকার মতন ছরবছা মানুষের আর কিছুতে হয় না। ইহাতে তাহার আত্মসম্মানে যেমন আঘাত লাগে, পরের অপমান বা নির্ব্যাতনে তাহার শতাংশের একাংশও আঘাত লাগিতে পারে না। এই বন্ধনবেদনাটাই তখন আমাদের শিক্ষিত সমাজে অত্যন্ত তীব্র হইয়া উঠিয়াছিল। এইজন্ত স্বাধীনতা এবং মুক্তির সংগ্রাম সর্বপ্রথমে ধর্ম ও সমাজের ক্ষেত্রেই বাধিয়া উঠিল। মহর্ষি এই সংগ্রামের পূর্বাভাসটা মাত্র আনিয়াছিলেন। শিক্ষিত সমাজের চিন্তকে তিনি স্বাধীন করিতে চেষ্টা করেন; তাহাদের ধর্মবুদ্ধিকে জাগাইয়া, ইংরাজী শিক্ষা ও যুরোপের সাধনার সংস্পর্শে আসিয়া, তাহাদের মধ্যে যে উচ্ছৃঙ্খলতা ও স্বৈচ্ছাচারিতা জাগিয়া উঠিয়াছিল তাহাকে সংযত করিয়াছিলেন। এইভাবে স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রামের জন্ত তিনি দেশবাসীদিগকে প্রস্তুত করিয়াছিলেন। কিন্তু এই সংগ্রাম যখন প্রত্যক্ষভাবে বাধিয়া উঠিল, প্রাচীনে নবীনে যখন মুখোমুখি হইয়া দাঁড়াইল, এবং কে কাহাকে বিধ্বস্ত করিবে তাহারই চেষ্টা আরম্ভ করিল, তখন মহর্ষির শাস্ত্র ধীর প্রকৃতি, এবং অস্থি-মজ্জাগত রক্ষণশীলতা এই বিপ্লব তরঙ্গে ঝাঁপাইয়া পড়িতে পারিল না। কেশবচন্দ্র তখন নবীন ব্রাহ্মদিগকে লইয়া এই ধর্ম ও সমাজ বিপ্লবের

মাঝখানে ‘জয় জগদীশ হরে’ বলিয়া লাফাইয়া পড়িলেন। এই শৌর্য্য বীর্য্যের বলেই তিনি এবং তাঁহার সহচর এবং অনুচরেরা বাংলার স্বাধীনতা ভিত্তারী শিক্ষিত সমাজের হৃদয় অধিকার করিয়া তাহাদের চিন্তা ও ভাবরাজ্যের রাজা হইয়া উঠিলেন। তাহাদের অন্তরে যে সকল ভাব মুক হইয়াছিল, কেশবচন্দ্রের দৈবশক্তিরসায়িত রসনায় তাহাই বাচাল হইয়া উঠিতে লাগিল। তাহাদের চিত্তে যে আকাজক্ষা ভয়ে ভয়ে নড়িতে চড়িতে ছিল, কেশবচন্দ্র এবং তাঁহার সঙ্গীগণের জীবনে তাহাই নির্ভীক হইয়া দাঁড়াইতে লাগিল। যে বন্ধন তাহাদের মর্মে মর্মে বাজিতেছিল অথচ যাহা ছেদন করিবার শক্তির প্রেরণা তাহারা পাইতেছিল না, কেশবচন্দ্র এবং তাঁহার সঙ্গীগণ অবলীলাক্রমে সে সব বন্ধন ছিড়িয়া মুক্ত পুরুষের মতন তাহাদের সমক্ষে দাঁড়াইলেন। এই ভাবেই স্বদেশবাসীগণের চিত্ত ও চিন্তাকে অধিকার করিয়া কেশবচন্দ্র নব্যশিক্ষিত বাঙ্গালী-সমাজের অধিনায়ক হইয়া উঠিলেন। তিনি যে স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রাম ঘোষণা করিলেন, শিক্ষিত বাঙ্গালী যুবকেরা দলে দলে সর্ব্বস্ব ত্যাগ করিয়া তাহাতে আসিয়া পড়িলেন। কেশবচন্দ্রের প্রথম জীবনের এই সাধনা মহার্ঘ বস্তু। সেই সাধনার উত্তরাধিকারীরূপেই বাংলা আজি পর্য্যন্ত ভারতের স্বাধীনতার সাধনে দীক্ষাগুরু ও শিক্ষাগুরু হইয়া আছে।

রাষ্ট্রীয় বন্ধনের বেদনা তখনও জাগে নাই, স্মৃতিরাজ্য রাষ্ট্রীয় মুক্তির বাসনাও প্রবল হয় নাই। তবে এই সাধনার পূর্ব্ব অবস্থা কেশবচন্দ্র অনেকটা সৃষ্টি করিয়াছিলেন। স্বাভাৱ্যের গৌরববোধ জাতীয় স্বাধীনতার প্রথম বনিয়াদ। কেশবচন্দ্র এই গৌরববোধ নানা দিক দিয়া জাগাইয়া তুলেন। তাঁহার মনীষা এবং বাগ্মিতা এ বিষয়ে এতটা

সাহায্য করিয়াছিল তাহার উল্লেখ করিয়াছি। ভারতবর্ষীয়-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠার কিছুদিন পরে কেশবচন্দ্র ধর্ম প্রচারার্থে বিলাতে যান। সেখানে তাঁহার অলোকসামান্য মনীষা ও বাগ্মিতাতে ইংরাজ সমাজ বিস্মিত ও স্তম্ভিত হইয়া যায়। কেশবচন্দ্রের নাম দেশময় ছাইয়া পড়ে। স্মরসিক পাঞ্চ (Punch) লিখেন :—

Big as lion or small as a wren

Who is this chunder Sen ?

মহারানী ভিক্টোরিয়া কেশবচন্দ্রকে নিমন্ত্রণ করিয়া তাঁহার সঙ্গে সাক্ষাৎ করেন, এবং নিজের ফটোগ্রাফ স্মৃতি-চিহ্নরূপে তাঁহাকে দান করেন। সামান্য মধ্যবিত্ত বাঙ্গালী নিজের কেবল মীনষা ও প্রতিভাবলে বিলাতকে কাঁপাইয়া, মাতাইয়া তুলিয়াছিলেন, এবং ব্রিটিশ সাম্রাজ্যের অধীশ্বরীর নিকটে রাজযোগ্য সম্মান পাইয়াছিলেন, ইহাতে কেবল বাঙ্গালীর নহে, কিন্তু সমগ্র ভারতবাসীর চিত্ত গৌরবে কাঁপিয়া উঠিয়াছিল। সে সময়ে সকল বিষয়েই আমরা ইংরাজের মুখাপেক্ষী হইয়াছিলাম। ইংরাজের গার্টিকিকেট মাথা পাতিয়া লইতাম। ইংরাজকে অত্যন্ত শ্রদ্ধার চক্ষে দেখিতাম। ইংরাজ আমাদিগের অপেক্ষা কতটা যে উঁচু, ইহা আমরা সকল সময় ধারণাই করিতে পারিতাম না। এই ইংরাজ যখন রাজা প্রজা সকলে মিলিয়া কেশবচন্দ্রের প্রতিভার নিকট মাথা হেঁট করিয়া দাঁড়াইল, তখন আমরা বাঙ্গালী ও ভারতবাসী বলিয়া অভূতপূর্ব গৌরব অনুভব করিতে লাগিতাম। এই স্বাভাৱ্যভিমান সর্বত্রই জাতীয় জীবনের এবং জাতীয় আত্মচেতনের—National life এবং National consciousness



এর সূচনা করে। কেশবচন্দ্র এইরূপেও আমাদের বর্তমান বৃহত্তর জাতীয় প্রচেষ্টার ভূমি প্রস্তুত করিয়াছিলেন।

বিলাতে যাইয়া তিনি যে সকল বক্তৃতা দেন তাহাতে অনেক সময়ই খোলাখুলিভাবে ইংরাজ চরিত্রের বিশেষতঃ ভারতবর্ষে ইংরাজ শাসনের দোষ কীর্তন করিয়াছিলেন। সেই সকল বক্তৃতা পড়িয়াও আমাদের আত্মচৈতন্যের উদয় হয়। দুনিয়াতে আজিও যে আমাদের কিছু দিবার আছে, সভ্য জগতের যে আমাদের নিকটে শিক্ষণীয় বিষয় আছে, কেশবচন্দ্রই প্রথমে শিক্ষিত বাঙ্গালীর অন্তরে এই ভাবটা জাগাইয়া দেন। এই দিক্ দিয়াও আমাদের বর্তমান স্বাদেশিকতার হরিদ্বারে কেশবচন্দ্রকে দেখিতে পাই।

প্রথম যুগের স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রামে কেশবচন্দ্র এবং তাঁহার অনুগত নবীন ব্রাহ্ম যুবকেরাই সেনানী হইয়াছিলেন। তাঁহারা যে স্বাধীনতার ভিত্তি প্রতিষ্ঠা করিয়া গিয়াছিলেন তাহারই উপরে আমাদের বর্তমান স্বাধীনতার বৃহত্তর প্রচেষ্টা গড়িয়া উঠিয়াছে। বাংলার নবযুগের ইতিহাসে কেশবচন্দ্র এবং তাঁহার ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের ইহাই প্রধান কীর্তি।

## ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ ও স্বাধীনতার সংগ্রাম—দ্বিতীয় অধ্যায়

স্বাধীনতার নামেই কেশবচন্দ্র এবং তাঁহার সঙ্গিগণ মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্র-নাথের দল ছাড়িয়া চলিয়া আসেন। ধর্মসম্বন্ধে মহর্ষি নিতান্ত স্বাদেশিক ছিলেন। কেশবচন্দ্র ব্রাহ্মধর্মকে সার্বজনীন করিয়া তুলিবার চেষ্টা করেন। মহর্ষির ব্রাহ্মধর্ম গ্রন্থ বেদ ও উপনিষদ হইতেই সংগৃহীত হয়। কেশবচন্দ্র জগতের সকল ধর্মশাস্ত্র হইতে একেশ্বরবাদ-প্রতিপাদক উপদেশ সংগ্রহ করিয়া ব্রাহ্মধর্মের নূতন গ্রন্থ প্রচার করিলেন। ভারতবর্ষীয়-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের আদর্শ কলিকাতা ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ অপেক্ষা বেশী উদার করিবার চেষ্টা হয়। রাজা রামমোহন জগতের ভিন্ন ভিন্ন ধর্মের পরস্পরের বৈরিতা নষ্ট করিয়া একটা উদার মৈত্রী স্থাপনের চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন। কেশবচন্দ্র রাজার সেই ভাবেরই অনুবর্তন করিয়া জগতের ভিন্ন ভিন্ন ধর্মসকলের মধ্যে একটা সমন্বয়-প্রতিষ্ঠার চেষ্টা করেন। রাজা এই বিভিন্ন ধর্মসকলের বৈশিষ্ট্যকে বাদ দিয়া তাহাদের মধ্যে যে মিলটুকু ছিল, তাহারই উপরে তাঁর ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজকে গড়িয়া তুলিতে চেষ্টা করেন। একপভাবে একপ্রকারের মিলনক্ষেত্র গড়িয়া তোলা সম্ভব। কিন্তু এপথে সত্য সমন্বয়ের প্রতিষ্ঠা হইতে পারে না। রাজা সে চেষ্টা করেন নাই; সে চেষ্টা করিবার সময়ও তখন আসে নাই। কেশবচন্দ্র এই সমন্বয়ের চেষ্টাই করিয়া-ছেন। যে পথে কেশবচন্দ্র এই সমন্বয়ের প্রতিষ্ঠা করিতে গিয়াছিলেন, তাহা সর্বতোভাবে সমীচীন হইয়াছিল কিনা, সে বিচারে প্রবৃত্ত হইব

না। বাংলার নবযুগের ইতিহাসে এই ধর্মতত্ত্বের আলোচনা ঠিক প্রাসঙ্গিকও হইবে না। তবে কেশবচন্দ্র এই সমন্বয় করিতে যাইয়া ভারতবর্ষের এবং জগতের ভিন্ন ভিন্ন ধর্মসম্প্রদায়কে একটা অতি বড় স্বাধীনতার সনন্দ দিয়াছিলেন, একথাটা বর্তমান প্রসঙ্গে বলা নিতান্তই প্রয়োজন। ধর্ম-বিজ্ঞানের ইতিহাসে ইহা অতি বড় কথা। প্রথম কথা ছিল, আমার ধর্মই একমাত্র সত্য ধর্ম, অগ্র ধর্ম সকল মিথ্যা। দ্বিতীয় কথা হইল, আমার ধর্ম সত্য, অগ্র ধর্মসকল একেবারে মিথ্যা নহে, তাহাতেও সত্য আছে; জগতের সকল ধর্মেই সত্য আছে। ইহাই ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের প্রথম কথা ছিল। এই সূত্র ধরিয়াই বেদ ও উপনিষদাদি ছাঁকিয়া তাহার সত্য সংগ্রহ করিয়া মহর্ষি ‘ব্রাহ্মধর্ম’ গ্রন্থ রচনা করেন। এই সূত্র অবলম্বনেই কেশবচন্দ্রও ভারতবর্ষীয়-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের “শ্লোকসংগ্রহ” রচনা করেন। সত্য ও অসত্য মিশ্রিত শাস্ত্র হইতে সত্যগুলিকে বাছিয়া লইতে হইলে সত্যের একটা কষ্টিপাথর আবশ্যক হয়। মহর্ষি এবং কেশবচন্দ্র উভয়েই নিজের বিচার-বুদ্ধিকে এই কষ্টিপাথররূপে ব্যবহার করেন। সকলে এ কষ্টিপাথর গ্রহণ করিবে না, করিতে পারেও না। এইজন্যই জগতে এত মতভেদ দেখিতে পাওয়া যায়। কেশবচন্দ্র পরজীবনে সকল ধর্মেই সত্য আছে, এই মতকেও ছাড়াইয়া যান। নববিধান প্রতিষ্ঠা করিতে যাইয়া তিনি কহেন, জগতের সকল ধর্মে কেবল সত্য আছে, তাহা নহে, জগতের সকল ধর্মই সত্য; নিজ নিজ অধিকারে নিজ নিজ দেশকালপাত্র-বিবেচনায় সকল ধর্মই সত্য। সকল ধর্মই ভগবদ্-প্রতিষ্ঠিত। সকল ধর্মই ঈশ্বরের বিধান। এইরূপে কেশবচন্দ্র জগতের সকল ধর্মকেই একটা অতি বড় স্বাধীনতার সনন্দ প্রদান

করেন। যতক্ষণ না জগতের ধার্মিকেরা এই সূত্র সত্য বলিয়া গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন, ততক্ষণ পর্য্যন্ত ধর্ম্মে ধর্ম্মে বিরোধ কিছুতেই নষ্ট হইবে না। সত্য অসাম্প্রদায়িকতা এইভাবেই কেবল প্রতিষ্ঠিত হওয়া সম্ভব। আধুনিক ভারতের জাতীয় একতা ও জাতীয় জীবন গঠনের উদ্দেশ্যে রাজা রামমোহন যে ব্রহ্মসভা প্রতিষ্ঠা করিয়াছিলেন, তাহা কেবল ভিত খুঁড়িয়াছিল মাত্র; কেশবচন্দ্র ‘সকল ধর্ম্মই সত্য’ এই সূত্র প্রচার করিয়া সেই পবিত্র মিলন-গন্দিরকেই গড়িয়া তুলিবার চেষ্টা করেন। হিন্দু যে দিন বুঝিবে, তার নিজের ধর্ম্ম তার নিজের নিকটে যেমন সত্য, বৈজিক নিয়মাধীনে ঐতিহাসিক অভিব্যক্তির ধারাতে তাহার ব্যক্তিগত সাধন ও সিদ্ধির সঙ্গে এই ধর্ম্মের যেমন অতি ঘনিষ্ঠ ও অঙ্গাঙ্গী সম্বন্ধ রহিয়াছে, সেইরূপ মুসলমানের নিকটে মুসলমান ধর্ম্ম, খৃষ্টিয়ানের নিকটে খৃষ্টিয়ান ধর্ম্ম, বৌদ্ধ ও জৈনের নিকটে তাহাদের নিজ নিজ ধর্ম্ম সম্পূর্ণ সত্য, ঐ সকল ধর্ম্মের আশ্রয়েই তাহারা নিজেদের জীবনে ধর্ম্ম সাধন করিয়া পরমার্থ লাভ করিবে; সেইদিন ভারতবর্ষে ধর্ম্মে ধর্ম্মে বিরোধ নিরস্ত হইয়া আধুনিক ধর্ম্ম-বিজ্ঞান ও ধর্ম্মতত্ত্বের একটা বিরাট স্বাধীনতার ভূমিতে আমাদের জাতীয় একতা গড়িয়া উঠিবে। ঐতিহাসিক অভিব্যক্তির সূত্র অবলম্বন করিয়া নিজ নিজ অধিকারে নিজ নিজ দেশকালপাত্রভেদে সকল ধর্ম্মই সত্য, এই উদার ভূমিতেই সমুদয় সাম্প্রদায়িক বিরোধ নষ্ট হইতে পারে। কেশবচন্দ্র এই সূত্রের প্রতিষ্ঠা করিয়া সত্য ভাবেই সর্বধর্ম্মসমন্বয়ের পথ খোলসা করিয়া গিয়াছেন।

## মহাত্মা কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের ধর্মজীবন ও ধর্মমত

স্বর্গীয় অধ্যাপক ডাক্তার পূর্ণানন্দ চট্টোপাধ্যায়

(Dr. P. Chatterji বিবৃত)

মহাত্মা কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের ধর্মজীবন ও ধর্মমত এত বিস্তৃত এবং কোন কোন অংশে এত জটিল যে একটি প্রবন্ধে তাহার সম্যক আলোচনা সম্ভব নয়, আমি এ সম্বন্ধে কেবল সাধারণভাবে কয়েকটি কথা বলিব। ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের জীবন আদর্শস্থানীয় মনে করি, এজ্ঞাই ইহার আলোচনা আমার নিকট প্রয়োজনীয় বোধ হইতেছে। একটি জীবন যতই মহোচ্চ হউক না কেন উহাতে ভ্রমভ্রান্তি এবং ত্রুটি যথেষ্টই থাকিবে। কিন্তু সেই সকলের প্রতি একান্ত দৃষ্টি রাখিলে কোন মহাপুরুষই মানুষের আধ্যাত্মিক উপকার সাধনে সমর্থ হইবেন না। বিশেষতঃ কেশবচন্দ্র সেন আমাদের সমকালীন লোক, তাহার দোষ ত্রুটি আমাদের চক্ষুর সমক্ষেই রহিয়াছে। তাঁহাকে প্রকৃতরূপে বুঝিতে হইলে সে গুলিকে কতক পরিমাণে চক্ষুর অন্তরালে রাখিয়া তাঁহার গুণ গুলির বিশেষ আলোচনা করিতে হইবে।

আমি পূর্বেই বলিলাম কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের জীবন আদর্শস্থানীয় মনে করি। এইরূপ কেন মনে করি ইহা জিজ্ঞাস্য হইতে পারে। ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীতে জাতিনির্বিশেষে জনসাধারণের মধ্যে ধর্মের যে আদর্শ প্রকাশিত হইয়াছে কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের জীবন তাহার একটি

দৃষ্টান্ত স্থল। সেই আদর্শ কি? একটু স্থিরচিন্তে চিন্তা করিলে দেখিতে পাইব যে বর্তমান শতাব্দীতে দুইটি ভাব সর্বোপরি প্রবল; (১) উন্নতি (Progress), (২) সামঞ্জস্য। মানব-জীবন স্বভাবতঃই উন্নতিশীল এবং জড়-জগত ও প্রাণি-জগতে ক্রম-বিকাশ নিয়ম রহিয়াছে। এইটি ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর একটি প্রধান ভাব। যিনি ইহা অগ্রাহ্য করিয়া কোনও ধর্মতত্ত্ব অথবা সমাজতত্ত্ব প্রকাশ করিবেন তিনি নিশ্চয়ই অশিক্ষিত বলিয়া প্রতিপন্ন হইবেন। বর্তমান সময়ের কি দর্শন, কি বিজ্ঞান, যাহাই কেন আলোচনা করি না, দেখিতে পাইব “উন্নতি” এবং “সামঞ্জস্য” এই দুইটি ভাব তাহার ভিতরে ক্রীড়া করিতেছে। ইংলণ্ডের দার্শনিক চুডামণি হারবার্টস্পেন্সার তাহার দর্শনকে Synthetic Philosophy বলিয়া থাকেন। বর্তমান শতাব্দীর সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ জার্মানিদেশীয় দার্শনিক পণ্ডিত হেইগেলের দর্শনেও এই দুই মূলমন্ত্র দেখিতে পাওয়া যায়। কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের ধর্মজীবন ও ধর্মমত উভয়েরই সাক্ষ্য প্রদান করিতেছে। তিনি দার্শনিক ছিলেন না, কিন্তু দার্শনিক অপেক্ষা উচ্চতর আসন পরিগ্রহ করিয়া ছিলেন। দার্শনিক আপনার মস্তিষ্কগত চিন্তা বিধিবদ্ধরূপে লিপিবদ্ধ করিতে প্রয়াসী; কেশবচন্দ্র সময়ের চিন্তা-স্রোত ও ভাব-স্রোত আপনার জীবনে সাধন করিয়াছিলেন। তিনি চন্দ্র ও জীবন দ্বারা ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর আদর্শপ্রকাশ করিয়াছেন। বাস্তবিক ইহার জীবন স্থিরচিন্তে অনুধ্যান করিলে দেখিতে পাই যে তাহার ভিতরে স্বন্দর একটি ক্রম-বিকাশ রহিয়াছে। অনেক ধর্মজীবন আছে যাহাতে উন্নতির আভাসও পাওয়া যায় না। দশ বৎসর পূর্বে যাহা ছিল আজও তাহাই। চিন্তার উন্নতি নাই, ভাবের উন্নতি নাই; এবং চরিত্রেরও

ক্ষুণ্ণি নাই। একইভাবে চলিতেছে। অল্পদর্শী লোকেরা স্বভাবতঃ এই সকল জীবনেরই প্রশংসা করিয়া থাকে, কেন না তাহাতে মতের অস্থিরতা দেখিতে পাওয়া যায় না। উন্নতিশীল জীবন যদিও বিশেষ বিশেষ বিষয়ে মত ও ভাব পরিবর্তন করিয়া থাকে, তথাপি জীবনের অভ্যন্তরে এক স্থায়ী ভাব ও চিন্তা নিগূঢ়রূপে কার্য্য করে। আপাততঃ বাহ্যিক পরিবর্তন দেখিয়া চিন্তাবিহীন সমালোচকগণ উন্নতিশীল জীবনে চাঞ্চল্য দোষ আরোপ করিয়া থাকে। কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের জীবনে এত বিবিধ প্রকারের কার্য্যকলাপ ও ভাবোচ্ছ্বাস দেখিতে পাওয়া যায় যে তাহার ভিতরে একত্ব কোথায় রহিয়াছে স্থির করা সহজ নয়। কার্য্যকলাপ ও ভাবোচ্ছ্বাসের ভিতরে পড়িয়া বিশেষ বিশেষ বিষয়ে তিনি যে স্ববিরোধিতা-দোষে দোষী হইয়াছিলেন তাহা অস্বীকার করা নিম্প্রয়োজন। কিন্তু যে ভাব ও চিন্তাটি তাঁহার ধর্ম্মজীবনের কেন্দ্রস্থানীয় হইয়াছিল তাহা একইভাবে থাকিয়া যৌবন হইতে প্রৌঢ়াবস্থা পর্য্যন্ত ক্রমিক উন্নতি লাভ করিয়াছিল। কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের জীবন বাস্তবিকই উন্নতিশীল। কি প্রণালীর ভিতর দিয়া এই উন্নতির স্রোত প্রবাহিত হইয়াছিল তাহা এইরূপে নির্দেশ করা যাইতে পারে। প্রথম বয়সে তিনি অধ্যয়নশীল ছিলেন। পাঠ ও গবেষণা তাঁহার জীবনের ভূষণ হইয়াছিল। তাঁহার জীবনবেত্তা বলেন তিনি প্রতিদিন আট দশ ঘণ্টা অধ্যয়ন করিতেন। কলিকাতার মেট্রিক্যাফ্‌হল্‌ তাঁহার অধ্যয়নের ক্ষেত্রভূমিরূপে প্রসিদ্ধ হইয়া রহিয়াছে। তিনি এই সময়ে দর্শন শাস্ত্রের সমধিক আলোচনা করিতেন এবং এই আলোচনা দ্বারা ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্মের প্রকৃত দার্শনিক ভিত্তি কোথায় ইহা আবিষ্কার করিতে প্রয়াসী হইয়াছিলেন। অধ্যয়ন ও গবেষণার সঙ্গে

সঙ্গে কার্যশীলতাও এই সময়ে প্রকাশ পাইয়াছিল। তাঁহার প্রথম জীবন চিন্তা-প্রধান। তিনি দর্শন ও ধর্মের কুটপ্রশ্ন সকল চিন্তা করিতে ভালবাসিতেন। ভারতবর্ষীয়-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ সংস্থাপনের কিঞ্চিৎকাল পূর্বে হইতেই কার্যশীলতা তাঁহার জীবনে প্রধানভাবে প্রকাশিত হয়। এই সময়ে তিনি নানাপ্রকার সমাজ সংস্করণ কার্যে আপনাকে নিবৃত্ত করিয়াছিলেন। ভারতবর্ষের নানাপ্রকার কুরীতি, দুর্নীতি ও কুসংস্কার তাঁহার হৃদয়কে ব্যথিত করিয়াছিল। তিনি কেবল উপাসনা লইয়াই পরিতৃপ্ত হইতে পারিলেন না; সমাজ-সংস্করণ-কার্যও ধর্মের একটি প্রধান অঙ্গ বলিয়া গ্রহণ করিলেন। অতএব তাঁহার জীবনে উন্নতির দ্বিতীয় সোপান কার্যশীলতা। কালক্রমে এই কার্যশীলতার মধ্য দিয়া ভক্তি-নদী প্রবাহিত হইল। ইহা ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে একটি অভূত-পূর্বে ঘটনা। মহাত্মা শ্রীচৈতন্য এই সময়ে কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবন অধিকার করিলেন। কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবনের প্রধান বিশেষত্ব, এই ভক্তি। শেষ জীবন পর্যন্ত ইনি জনসাধারণের নিকটে ভক্ত বলিয়াই পরিচিত হইয়া গিয়াছেন। কিন্তু জীবনের শেষভাগে ভক্তি ঘনতর ও গাঢ়তর হইয়া যোগের আকার ধারণ করিয়াছিল। কেবল উন্নত হওয়াই ধর্মের শ্রেষ্ঠ অবস্থা মনে করিয়া তিনি পরিতৃপ্ত থাকিতে পারিলেন না। এই সময়ে যোগাভ্যাসে রত হইলেন। যোগ কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবনের সর্বোচ্চ সোপান। অতএব দেখিতে পাইতেছি ইঁহার জীবন চারিটি প্রণালীর ভিতর দিয়া চলিয়া আসিয়াছে। (১) চিন্তাশীলতা অথবা জ্ঞান, (২) কার্যশীলতা অথবা কর্ম, (৩) ভক্তি, (৪) যোগ। ঐহারা জার্মানদেশীয় হেইগেলের দর্শন শাস্ত্র আলোচনা করেন তাঁহারা দেখিতে পাইবেন



যে এই দার্শনিকের ক্রম-বিকাশ নিয়ম কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবনে প্রকাশিত হইয়াছিল, অর্থাৎ তাঁহার জীবনের শেষ অবস্থা প্রথম অবস্থারই পূর্ণ বিকাশ। অথবা কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবনে প্রত্যক্ষবাদী কম্‌টের ক্রম-বিকাশ নিয়মের বিপরীত নিয়ম প্রত্যক্ষ করা যাইতে পারে; কেননা কম্‌ট যাহাকে Theological stage বলিয়াছেন অর্থাৎ সর্বভূতে ঈশ্বর দর্শন, যাহাকে আমরা যোগের অবস্থা বলি, তাহা কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবনের প্রথম অবস্থায় না হইয়া শেষ অবস্থায় হইয়াছিল। নাস্তিক চুড়ামণি কম্‌টের নিয়ম তিনি এই প্রকারে তাঁহার জীবনদ্বারা ভ্রান্ত প্রমাণ করিয়া গিয়াছেন। যাহা হউক, এখন জিজ্ঞাস্য এই, কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবনের এই ক্রম-বিকাশ বা ক্রম-উন্নতির মূল কোথায়? কোন্ মূলমন্ত্র অবলম্বন করাতে তিনি ধর্মজীবনের বিবিধরাজ্য পরিভ্রমণ করিতে সমর্থ হইয়াছিলেন? একটি আশ্চর্যের বিষয় এই যে তাঁহাকে যে এই সকল বিবিধ রাজ্য পরিভ্রমণ করিতে হইবে তাহা তিনি ধর্মজীবনের উদ্যোগে কিঞ্চিৎমাত্রও আভাস পান নাই। কোথায় যাইতে হইবে, কোথায় পরিণতি, তাহা তিনি কিছুই জানিতেন না। বিধাতার অদৃশ্য হস্ত তাঁহাকে চিরদিন ধর্ম পথে পরিচালিত করিয়াছে। একটি বৃক্ষ যেমন আপনা আপনি বর্দ্ধিত হয়, কেশবচন্দ্রও সেইরূপে বর্দ্ধিত হইয়াছিলেন। এই ক্রম-বিকাশের মূল নির্ণয় করা কৰ্ত্তব্য। একটু সূক্ষ্মভাবে দেখিলে দেখিতে পাইব যে অতি সহজ ও সাধারণ পন্থা অবলম্বন করিয়া ইনি এতবড় উন্নত অবস্থায় উপনীত হইতে সমর্থ হইয়াছিলেন। সেই পন্থা আর কিছুই নয়, কেবল জীবনের পবিত্রতা ও প্রার্থনা। এই দুইটিই মানবজীবনে কি মহা বিপ্লব সংঘটন করিতে পারে কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবন তাহার জলন্ত দৃষ্টান্ত। ধর্মজীবনে প্রথম

অবস্থায় ইনি কোনও গুরু অথবা শাস্ত্রের সাহায্য পান নাই। কেবল পবিত্রতা এবং প্রার্থনাই তাঁহাকে ধর্মজীবনের পথ দেখাইয়া দিয়াছিল। হৃদয়ের বিশুদ্ধতা এবং সরল প্রার্থনা এই দুইটি সম্বল লইয়া ইনি ধর্মরাজ্যে প্রবেশ করিলেন। কেশবচন্দ্রের এই দৃষ্টান্ত আমাদের নিকট যারপর নাই শিক্ষা-প্রদ। কেননা কোন সাধন অবলম্বন করিয়া প্রকৃত ধর্মজীবন গঠন করিব, এই চিন্তায় আমরা অনেক সময় ব্যতিব্যস্ত হইয়া পড়ি। কত কুচ্ছ্রসাধন, মন্ম গ্রহণ এবং অস্বাভাবিক উপায়ই না অবলম্বন করি! প্রকৃত পক্ষে আমরা আত্ম-দৃষ্টি-বিহীন, এ জন্মই এই প্রকার ভ্রমে পতিত এবং কুপথ-গামী হইয়া থাকি। জীবনের অভ্যন্তরস্থ গভীর কালিমাই যে আমাদের ধর্মজীবনের পথকে অवरুদ্ধ করিয়া রাখে তাহা আমরা দেখিতে পাই না। জীবন বাহ্য-ভাবে বিশুদ্ধ হইতে পারে, এমন কি চিন্তা পর্য্যন্তও বিশুদ্ধ হইতে পারে, তথাপি জীবনের অভ্যন্তরে অপবিত্রতা থাকা সম্ভব। বিষয়সক্তি ও স্বার্থপরতাই ধর্মজীবনের প্রধান অন্ত-রায়। বৈরাগ্য প্রকৃতপক্ষে ধর্মজীবনের আরম্ভ। সত্য সত্যই মহাত্মা কার্লাইন বলিয়াছেন, “It is with renunciation that life properly speaking can be said to begin.” কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবনে প্রথম অবস্থায়ই বৈরাগ্য প্রকাশ পাইয়াছিল। তিনি প্রথম জীবনে আমোদ প্রমোদকে বিষবৎ পরিত্যাগ করিয়াছিলেন। তখন তাঁহার বদন মণ্ডল গভীর কালিমায় আচ্ছন্ন থাকিত। বৈরাগ্য তাঁহাকে গৃহ-তাগী সন্ন্যাসী করে নাই, অথচ জীবনের পবিত্রতা সাধনেই ত্রুটি করিয়াছিল। বিবেকের উজ্জ্বল আলোকে জীবনের ছোট বড় পাপ সকল ইহার সম্মুখে প্রকাশিত হইয়া পড়িল; তাঁহার

অমৃতপ্ত হৃদয় হইতে সরল গভীর প্রার্থনা ধ্বনি উত্থিত হইতে লাগিল। সেই প্রার্থনার দ্বার দিয়া দর্ষার বারিধারার ভ্রায় ঈশ্বরের প্রসাদ বারি তাঁহার হৃদয়কে সিক্ত করিতে আরম্ভ করিল। সেই সিক্ত ভূমি হইতে প্রকাণ্ড ধর্ম-বৃক্ষ উৎপন্ন হইয়া তাঁহার জীবনকে সুশোভিত করিয়াছিল।

কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের আর একটি বিশেষত্ব সামাজ্য। ইহা আমি পূর্বেই উল্লেখ করিয়াছি। তাঁহার জীবন শুধু উন্নতিশীল ছিল এমন নহে, উহা সমগ্রসীমিত উন্নতি প্রকাশ করিয়াছে। তিনি একটি ছাড়িয়া অগুটি ধরিয়াছেন, পরে সেইটুকু ছাড়িয়াছেন, তাঁহার প্রণালী এরূপ নহে। তিনি জ্ঞান ছাড়িয়া কর্ম্মী হন নাই, অথবা কর্ম্ম ছাড়িয়া শুদ্ধ হন নাই। জ্ঞান, কর্ম্ম, ভক্তি ও যোগ তাঁহার জীবনে যথাযথরূপে স্থান লাভ করিয়াছিল। এই সামাজ্য ও সম্মিলন ভারত-বর্ষে নিশ্চয়ই এক অভিনব ব্যাপার। বোধ হয় কোন সাধকের জীবনে ইহা এইরূপভাবে পূর্বে কখনও দেখা যায় নাই। এজন্যই কেশবচন্দ্র সেনকে আজ পর্য্যন্তও আমরা সম্যকরূপ বুঝিতে সমর্থ হইতেছি না। অথবা আমরা অনেকে এই সামাজ্যের গুরুত্ব অনুভব করি না; কারণ ইহা ব্রাহ্ম সাধারণের নিকট যারপর নাই সহজ হইয়া পড়িয়াছে। যিনি ইহার প্রবর্তক, তিনি যে একটা মহা ব্যাপার জীবনে সংসিদ্ধ করিয়াছিলেন তাহা আমরা বুঝিতে পারি না। আমরা কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের সমকালীন লোক, তাঁহার ভাবে ভাবুক, তাঁহার চিন্তায় বদ্ধিত এবং তাঁহার আধ্যাত্মিকতা অল্লাধিক পরিমাণে আমাদের রক্ত মাংসে প্রবেশ করিয়াছে। এই জন্মই তাঁহার জীবনের গুরুত্ব প্রকৃতভাবে আমরা অনুভব করি

না। কিন্তু চিন্তাশীল হইয়া দেখিলে দেখিতে পাইব যে এই সাম-  
 জ্ঞত্ব, যাহা ব্রাহ্ম সাধারণের সাধারণ সম্পত্তি, তাহার সাধন-পন্থা  
 কেশবচন্দ্রই সর্বপ্রথমে প্রদর্শন করিয়াছিলেন। এই ভাব তিনি  
 আপনার জীবনে এতই সত্যরূপে এবং গভীরভাবে সাধন করিতে  
 সমর্থ হইয়াছিলেন যে উহা ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে অন্তর্গত না হইয়া থাকিতে  
 পারিল না। হিন্দুজাতির প্রকৃতি সাধারণতঃ একদেশদশী। কোন  
 হিন্দু যদি ভক্তি-ভাবাপন্ন হন তবে তাঁহাকে যোগী অথবা কষ্মী করা  
 বড়ই কষ্ট; আবার তিনি যদি বৈদ্যাস্কের গ্রাম চিন্তাশীল হন,  
 তবে তিনি হয় কালক্রমে মহা তর্কিক হইয়া দাঁড়াইবেন, না হয়  
 যোগেই একেবারে নিমগ্ন হইয়া পড়িবেন। ধর্মের এই সকল  
 পরস্পর আপাত বিরুদ্ধ ভাবের ভিতরে সন্ধি সংস্থাপন করা কি  
 দুরূহ ব্যাপার তাহা চিন্তাশীল ব্যক্তিমাত্রই অনুভব করিতে পারেন।  
 কেশবচন্দ্র এই দুর্লভ কার্যে ব্রতী হইয়া অনেকাংশে কৃতকার্য হইয়া-  
 ছিলেন। ইনি সর্বপ্রথমে খ্রীষ্টের ভাব লইয়া ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে প্রবেশ  
 করেন। কিন্তু কালক্রমে ভারতবর্ষের শিক্ষিত সম্ভ্রাদায়ের মধ্যে বিলুপ্ত-  
 প্রায় খ্রীষ্টেতত্ত্ব তাঁহার জীবনে প্রকাশ পাইলেন। তিনি যদি এক-  
 জন শুধু চিন্তাশীল সমাজ সংস্কারক হইতেন তবে হয়ত খ্রীষ্টেতত্ত্বের  
 বিষয়ে ভূরি ভূরি গ্রন্থ রচনা করিতেন এবং সেই সকল গ্রন্থ-দ্বারা  
 হয়ত কেহ কেহ মহাত্মা চৈতন্তের দিকে আকৃষ্ট হইতেন। কেশব-  
 চন্দ্রের প্রণালী স্বতন্ত্র ছিল। চৈতন্ত কোন দিনই তাঁহার চিন্তার  
 বিষয় হন নাই, সদয় ও চরিত্রকে সম্পূর্ণরূপে অধিকার করিয়াছিলেন।  
 এই জগৎই কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবনের ভিতর দিয়া ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে ভক্তি-নদী  
 অবাধে প্রবাহিত হইতে পারিল। আজ কাল ছোট বড় সকল ব্রাহ্মই

অস্বাভাবিক পরিমাণে চৈতন্যের পক্ষপাতী এবং মৃদঙ্গের শব্দে উন্মত্ত হইয়া পড়েন। শিক্ষিত সম্প্রদায় ত্রীচৈতন্যের নাম পর্য্যন্তও ভুলিয়া বাইতে ছিলেন এবং মৃদঙ্গ করতাল ইত্যাদিকে ঘৃণার চক্ষে দর্শন করিতে ছিলেন। কেশবচন্দ্র চৈতন্যকে বঙ্গদেশে পুনরুদ্ধার করিলেন এবং মৃদঙ্গ করতালকে স্বেচ্ছা বাধ্য স্বরূপে পরিণত করিলেন। ইনি বঙ্গদেশে কেবল চৈতন্যকেই পুনরুদ্ধার করিলেন তাহা নহে, মহাত্মা শাক্যমুনিকেও আমাদের সম্মুখে আনিয়া পরিলেন। তৎকালে শাক্য-মুনিও বোধ হয় বাঙ্গালীর নিকটে কেবল একটা কথার কথা ছিলেন। কেশবচন্দ্র তাঁহাকে বাঙ্গালীর হৃদয়ে আধ্যাত্মিক শক্তিরূপে পরিণত করিলেন; এবং তাঁহার নির্বাণ-তত্ত্ব আমাদেরকে কতক পরিমাণে শিখাইলেন। এইরূপে তিনি ঈশা, চৈতন্য ও শাক্যমুনির মধ্যে এক নিগূঢ় যোগ সংস্থাপন করিলেন এবং আপনার চরিত্র দ্বারা দেখাইলেন যে, এই তিন মহাপুরুষের ভিতরে কোন বিবাদ বিসম্বাদ নাই, বরং তাঁহাদের পরস্পরের মধ্যে এক মহা সম্বন্ধ রহিয়াছে, যে সম্বন্ধ প্রত্যেক সাধকই আপনার জীবনে সংস্থাপন করিতে সমর্থ।

মহাপুরুষদিগের ভিতরে যে নিগূঢ় যোগ রহিয়াছে কেশবচন্দ্র আপনার চরিত্রদ্বারা কেবল তাহাই প্রতিপন্ন করিলেন তাহা নহে, তিনি স্বদেশীয় ও বিদেশীয় জাতির মধ্যেও যে আধ্যাত্মিক সম্বন্ধ রহিয়াছে, তাহা দেখাইয়া দিলেন। ইংলণ্ডীয় সভ্যতা এবং ভারত-বর্ষীয় আধ্যাত্মিকতা পরস্পর বিরুদ্ধ ভাবাপন্ন বলিয়াই অনেকে আজ পর্য্যন্তও মনে করেন। এখনও আমরা অনেকে ইংলণ্ডের সভ্যতাকে জড়ীয় ভাব মনে করিয়া ঘৃণা করি। উহা যে গভীর আধ্যাত্মিকতার পার্শ্বে অবস্থিতি করিতে পারে তাহা বুঝিয়া উঠিতে

পারি না। কিন্তু কেশবচন্দ্রের ধর্মজীবনের আর একটি মহত্ব এই যে তিনি পাশ্চাত্য সভ্যতা এবং স্বদেশীয় ভাবুকতার মধ্যে অত্যাশ্চর্য্য সন্ধি সংস্থাপন করিয়াছিলেন। আনাদিগের মধ্যে যদি কোন সাধক ভাব-প্রধান হন, তবে তিনি সহজেই সভ্যতার চাকচিক্যকে ঘৃণা করিতে আরম্ভ করেন। উহার ভিতরে জড়ীয় ভাব ভিন্ন তিনি আর কিছুই দেখেন না। ষাঁহারা সভ্যতার ভূষণে বিভূষিত তাঁহাদের মধ্যে যে ভাব-প্রধান আধ্যাত্মিকতা অবস্থিত করিতে পারে, তাহা হয়ত তিনি কল্পনা করিতেও সমর্থ হন না। তিনি তখন সভ্যতার সৌন্দর্য্যকে দূরে নিক্ষেপ করিয়া কোপিন বদ্বল প্রভৃতিরই বিশেষ পক্ষপাতী হইয়া উঠেন। দুইদিকের সমতা রক্ষা করা তাঁহার পক্ষে আর সম্ভব হয় না। কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবন এই সমতার এক জীবন্ত দৃষ্টান্ত। তিনি যারপর নাই ভাব-প্রধান লোক ছিলেন ইহা সকলেই স্বীকার করেন। ভাবুকতা দ্বারা তাঁহার অনেক কার্য্যের ক্ষতি হইয়াছে, ইহাও আমরা দেখিতে পাই। কিন্তু তাই বলিয়া কি তিনি সভ্যতাকে কোন দিনও পরিহার করিয়াছিলেন? সৌন্দর্য্য-প্রিয়তা তাঁহার জীবনের একটি বিশেষ লক্ষণ। আপনার দেহ ও পরিচ্ছদের প্রতি তাঁহার চিরদিন দৃষ্টি ছিল। দৈহিক সৌন্দর্য্যকে তিনি পবিত্রতার চক্ষে নিরীক্ষণ করিতেন। এইরূপে সভ্যতা এবং ভাবুকতা তাঁহার জীবনে একাঙ্গন প্রাপ্ত হইয়াছিল। প্রকৃত পক্ষে পূর্ব ও পশ্চিম দেশের সম্মিলন তাঁহার জীবনের এক প্রধান ব্রত বলিয়া তিনি গ্রহণ করিয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার কার্য্যও কথায় চিরদিন এইভাবে প্রকাশ পাইয়াছে। ভারতবর্ষে ইংলণ্ডীয় সভ্যতার আগমন তিনি বিধাতার বিধান মনে করিতেন। এই জন্তই ইংলণ্ডের সভ্যতাকে

অগ্রাহ্য করা এবং ঈশ্বরের ইচ্ছার বিরুদ্ধে দণ্ডায়মান হওয়া তিনি একই মনে করিতেন। তিনি কেবল সভ্যতা সংস্থাপনে বাস্তব ছিলেন তাহা নহে, যাহাতে ভারতবর্ষীয় ইংরাজগণ ও ভারতবর্ষীয় লোকদিগের মধ্যে সখ্যভাব সংস্থাপিত হয় ইহার চেষ্টা আজীবন করিয়া গিয়াছেন। তিনি নিজে কখনও পক্ষপাতিত্ব অবলম্বন করেন নাই। ইহা তাঁহার প্রথম সুপ্রসিদ্ধ বক্তৃতাতেই (Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia) প্রকাশ পাইয়াছিল। তিনি এইরূপে রাজনৈতিক জগতেরও এক মহা উপকার সাধন করিয়া গিয়াছেন। বর্তমান সময়ে বঙ্গদেশে, বিশেষতঃ ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে, ইংরাজের প্রাতি যে নতকটা সম্ভাব আমরা দেখিতেছি, মনে হয়, ইহা তাঁহারই চেষ্টার ফল।

অতএব কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবন পর্যালোচনা করিয়া উহাতে দুইটি বিশেষত্ব প্রত্যক্ষ করিলাম; উন্নতি ও সামঞ্জস্য। ইহার জীবনের আরও অনেক বিশেষত্ব আছে, কিন্তু এই দুইটিই মূলীভূত বিশেষত্ব। কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের জীবন সমালোচনা করিতে হইলে উক্ত দুইটি বিশেষত্ব অবলম্বন করিয়াই করিতে হইবে; নতুবা তাঁহাকে আমরা যথাযথরূপে বুঝিতে সক্ষম হইব না।

এক্ষণে আমি তাঁহার ধর্মমত সম্বন্ধে দুই চারিটি কথা বলিতে প্রবৃত্ত হইতেছি। কেশবচন্দ্রের ধর্মজীবনে ও ধর্মমতে এত ঘনিষ্ঠ সম্পর্ক যে ধর্মমত গুলি তাঁহার জীবনেরই প্রতিবিম্ব মাত্র। কেশবচন্দ্র যাহা বলিয়াছেন তাঁহার মূল বিষয়গুলি তিনি আপন জীবনে সাধন করিয়াছিলেন, এই জন্তই তাঁহার কথার এত মূল্য এবং এত প্রভাব। পক্ষান্তরে আবার ধর্মমত ব্যাখ্যা করিতে গিয়া নিজ জীবনের অভিজ্ঞতা বলাতে লোকে অনেক সময় তাঁহাকে অহঙ্কারী

বলিয়াছে। সে যাহা হউক, কেশবচন্দ্রের ধর্মমত তাঁহার ধর্মজীবন হইতে পৃথক নহে।

কেশবচন্দ্র সামঞ্জস্য অথবা সার্কভৌমিকত্বের বার্তাবহ হইয়াই ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে আসিয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার প্রথম জীবন হইতে শেষ জীবন পর্য্যন্ত তিনি যত কথা বলিয়াছেন এবং যত মত প্রচার করিয়াছেন, তাহার মূলে এই সামঞ্জস্যের মত। “unsectarianism” অর্থাৎ “অসাম্প্রদায়িকতা” এই কথাটি তিনি যৌবন সময় হইতে জীবনের শেষ দিন পর্য্যন্ত পুনঃ পুনঃ উচ্চারণ করিয়া গিয়াছেন। তিনি ধর্ম-জীবনের প্রারম্ভেই জাতিভেদের বিরুদ্ধে সমর ঘোষণা করিয়াছিলেন। ইংলণ্ডে কেশবচন্দ্র কোন্ ধর্ম প্রচার করিতে গিয়াছিলেন? তিনি সেখানে গিয়া বলিয়াছিলেন যে খ্রীষ্টানদিগের মধ্যে বিভিন্ন সম্প্রদায় দেখিয়া তিনি যারপর নাই ব্যথিত হইয়াছেন। খ্রীষ্টীয়জগতে এই প্রকার দলাদলি কেন? তারপর ইংলণ্ড এবং ভারতবর্ষের মধ্যে যাহাতে সৌহার্দ সংস্থাপিত হয় তিনি ইংলণ্ডে তাহার যথেষ্ট চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন। ভারতবর্ষীয়-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ সংস্থাপনের পর সকল ধর্ম হইতেই সত্য সংগ্রহ করা তাঁহার জীবনের প্রধান কায হইয়াছিল। অবশেষে জীবনের শেষভাগে “নববিধান” নামে সমুদয় ধর্ম বিধান সমন্বয় করিতে তিনি যত্নশীল হইয়াছিলেন। অতএব ইনি জীবনের প্রথম হইতে শেষ পর্য্যন্ত এই সমন্বয় ক্রিয়াতেই নিযুক্ত ছিলেন। এক্ষণে আমি তাঁহার কয়েকটি বিশেষ বিশেষ মত আলোচনা করিব।

ব্রাহ্মধর্মের ভিত্তি নির্ণয় করা কেশবচন্দ্রের প্রথম জীবনের প্রধান কায। ব্রাহ্মধর্ম কোন্ ভিত্তির উপরে সংস্থাপিত, তিনি এই চিন্তায় প্রবৃত্ত হইলেন। অনেক গবেষণা এবং দর্শনশাস্ত্র আলোচনার পর



তিনি এই সিদ্ধান্তে উপনীত হইলেন যে সহজ-জ্ঞানই (Intuition) ব্রাহ্মধর্মের ভিত্তি। এই মতটি ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে একেবারে নূতন না হইলেও কেশবচন্দ্রই ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে ইহার প্রাধান্য বিস্তার করিয়া গিয়াছেন। অত্রান্ত শাস্ত্র এবং অত্রান্ত গুরু যখন ব্রাহ্মধর্ম হইতে তিরোহিত হইল তখন আর কোন্ ভিত্তির উপরে ব্রাহ্মধর্ম দাঁড়াইতে পারে ? মানবের স্বভাবসিদ্ধ ধর্মভাব এবং ধর্ম-জ্ঞানের উপরেই দাঁড়াইবে। “সহজ-জ্ঞান” এই কথাটি লইয়া সেই সময়ে অনেক বাকবিতণ্ডা হইয়া গিয়াছে। মহাত্মা লালবিহারী দে ইহার প্রতি অনেক ঠাট্টা বিক্রপ নিক্ষেপ করিয়াছিলেন। ছুংখের বিষয় কেশবচন্দ্র যে ভাবে, সেই সময় এই মতটি প্রচার করিয়াছিলেন তাহাতে ইহার তীব্র সমালোচনা হওয়া কিছুই আশ্চর্য্যের বিষয় নয়। স্কটলণ্ডের দার্শনিক টমাস্ রিড্ ও হেমিল্ টনের নিকট হইতেই যেন এই মতটি তিনি পাইয়াছিলেন এই প্রকার ভাব প্রকাশ করিতেন। স্কটলণ্ড দেশীয় দার্শনিকগণ যদিও সহজ-জ্ঞানের অনেক কথা বলিয়াছেন তথাপি তাঁহারা এই মতের প্রকৃত তাৎপর্য্য অনুভব করিয়াছিলেন কিনা সন্দেহ। কেশবচন্দ্র যদিও “Intuition” এই কথাটি ব্যবহার করিতেন তথাপি ঠিক স্কট দার্শনিকদিগের ভায়ে যে ব্যবহার করিতেন তাহা আমার মনে হয় না। Intuition বলিতে তিনি কি বুঝিতেন ? কতকগুলি বিশেষ বিশেষ স্বভাবজাত মত কি ? আমি ঠিক তাহা মনে করি না। ডাইসন্ সাহেব তাঁহাকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিয়াছিলেন, “তুমি যদি Intuitions মান তবে ধর্ম শিক্ষার প্রয়োজন কি ?” তাহাতে কেশবচন্দ্র উত্তর করিলেন, “Intuition আছে বলিয়াই শিক্ষা সম্ভব, নতুবা সম্ভব হইত না।” ইহাতেই বুঝা যাইতেছে যে সহজ-

জ্ঞান বলাতে তিনি কোনও পরিস্ফুট মত মনে করিতেন না, মানবের ধর্ম উপার্জনের যে স্বাভাবিক ও সার্বভৌমিক ক্ষমতা তাহাই বুঝিতেন। ক্যান্টের দর্শন তিনি ভাল করিয়া পড়িয়াছিলেন কি না জানি না, কিন্তু ইহাতে ক্যান্টের মতের আভাস আছে। যাহা হউক, খ্রীষ্টান্দিগের “orginal Sin” নামক মতের সহিত কেশবচন্দ্রের সহজ-জ্ঞানের মতের বিশেষ সম্বন্ধ আছে। মানবের হৃদয় স্বভাবতঃই বিকৃত, ইহা তিনি সম্পূর্ণরূপে অগ্রাহ্য করিলেন। মানব স্বভাবতঃই নির্মল ও ধর্মপ্রবণ, তৎপরিবর্তে এই মত গ্রহণ করিলেন। মানবজাতির এই স্বাভাবিক গুণ আছে বলিয়াই ধর্মের একত্ব, শিক্ষা, ও সার্বভৌমিকত্ব সম্ভব হইয়াছে। ব্রাহ্মধর্ম মানবের এই স্বাভাবিক গুণের উপরেই সংস্থাপিত। যাহা হউক, সহজ-জ্ঞানের মত তিনি দর্শন শাস্ত্রের কষ্ট-পাথরে ফেলিয়া যে সম্পূর্ণরূপে সত্য প্রতিপন্ন করিতে পারিয়াছিলেন তাহা নহে। প্রকৃত পক্ষে তিনি কোন কালেও দার্শনিক ছিলেন না। কাজে কাজেই তাঁহার মত গুলি দার্শনিকের চক্ষে চিরদিনই অপরিষ্কৃত ও অপরিপক্ক বলিয়া প্রতীয়মান হইবে। মোট কথা এই—ধর্মকে কেশবচন্দ্র সম্পূর্ণরূপে অবস্থা ও শিক্ষার ফল মনে করিতেন না। ধর্ম মানুষের স্বাভাবিক অবস্থা, অধর্মই অস্বাভাবিক অবস্থা। সাধন দ্বারা অস্বাভাবিক অবস্থাকে স্বাভাবিক করিতে হইবে।

কেশবচন্দ্র ধর্মকে যেমন সহজ ও স্বাভাবিক ভিত্তির উপরে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিলেন, সেইরূপ ধর্ম সাধনের পন্থাও সহজ এবং স্বাভাবিক মনে করিতেন। সমুদয় অস্বাভাবিক উপায়কে তিনি ঘৃণার চক্ষে দর্শন করিতেন, শুধু তাহা নহে—পাপ মনে করিতেন। নাসিকা

ৰুদ্ধ করিয়া প্রাণায়াম যোগ প্রভৃতি সাধন-পন্থার তিনি যথেষ্ট  
 প্রতিবাদ করিয়া গিয়াছেন। তিনি বলিতেছেন—“হে ব্রাহ্ম, কল্পিত  
 পথে যাইও না। স্বাভাবিক ও সহজ প্রণালী অবলম্বন কর ...  
 ... ব্রাহ্মধর্ম স্বাভাবিক ধর্ম, আমাদের ধর্ম,  
 অস্বাভাবিক হইতে পারে না। যে পথ অস্বাভাবিক ব্রাহ্ম কখনও  
 সে পথে যান না। শরীর যদি শীতল বায়ু চায়, তাহা স্বাভাবিক  
 প্রণালীতে প্রাপ্ত হওয়া যায়। প্রেমের শীতল বায়ু লাভ করাও আত্মার  
 পক্ষে কেমন স্বাভাবিক। সমুদয় অভাবগুলির পূরণ স্বাভাবিক  
 প্রণালীতে হইবে, ইহাতে বাহ্যিক আড়ম্বরের প্রয়োজন নাই। প্রকৃত  
 ধর্ম আড়ম্বর শূন্য। ইহার সাধন সহজ, যোগ বৈরাগ্য প্রভৃতি সকলই  
 সহজ। বহু কষ্টে ধর্ম সঞ্চয় করিতে হয় না। ...  
 যথার্থ ধ্যান করিতে অনেক সময় লাগে, ঈশ্বরে চিন্তাসমাধান বহু  
 আয়াস-সাধ্য, সহজে ব্রহ্মানন্দ লাভ করা যায় না, নিশ্বাস-প্রশ্বাস  
 অবরোধ করিয়া যোগ করিতে হয়, যথার্থ ব্রহ্মযোগী এরূপ কখনও  
 বলেন না।” (সেবকের নিবেদন, তৃতীয় খণ্ড, ৩৬ ও ৩৭ পৃষ্ঠা)।  
 বাস্তবিক চরিত্র যখন সম্পূর্ণরূপে নির্মল হয় এবং তাহার সঙ্গে যখন  
 ঈশ্বরপ্রীতি সংযুক্ত হয় তখন ধর্মজীবন স্বভাবতঃই বিকাশ পাইতে  
 থাকে, কোন অস্বাভাবিক পন্থা অবলম্বনের প্রয়োজন হয় না। ঈশ্বরে  
 দৃঢ় বিশ্বাস তখন সহজেই প্রতিষ্ঠিত হয়। পবিত্রতাও প্রীতি হইতেই  
 বিশ্বাস সঞ্জীবিত হয় এবং সেই বিশ্বাসই আমাদের কাছে ঈশ্বর দর্শনে  
 সমর্থ করে। কেশবচন্দ্র সাধারণ ধর্মতত্ত্ব যে প্রকার স্বাভাবিক ভিত্তির  
 উপরে সংস্থাপন করিয়াছেন ঈশ্বর তত্ত্বও সেই প্রকারই করিয়াছেন।  
 কি প্রকারে ঈশ্বরকে লাভ করিতে হইবে? বিশ্বাসই একমাত্র পন্থা।

গভীর শাস্ত্রজ্ঞ হইলেই ঈশ্বরকে পাওয়া যায়, এমন নহে; কিন্তু সরল শুদ্ধ-চিত্ত বিশ্বাসী হইলে তাঁহাকে অনায়াসে লাভ করা যায়। কেশবচন্দ্র ঈশ্বরতত্ত্ব নিরূপণের জন্য দর্শন ও বিজ্ঞানের আলোচনাকে অগ্রাহ্য করিতেন না। কিন্তু ঐ সকল উপায়ের দ্বারা ঈশ্বরের বিগুৰ্দ্ধ একটি সংজ্ঞামাত্র পাওয়া যাইতে পারে, স্বয়ং ভগবানের সহিত সাক্ষাৎকার লাভ হয় না। পূর্বেই বলিয়াছি কেশবচন্দ্র দার্শনিক ছিলেন না; কাজে কাজেই তিনি কোন কালেও ব্রহ্মের দার্শনিক তত্ত্ব নিরূপণে যত্নশীল হন নাই। তিনি সাধক ছিলেন, বিশ্বাসের পন্থা অবলম্বন করিয়াই চলিয়াছেন এবং বিশ্বাসই শিক্ষা দিয়াছেন। এই বিশ্বাস-তত্ত্ব যদ্বারা ঈশ্বর দর্শন ও মানবের নবজীবন লাভ হয়, তাহা তিনি তাঁহার তিনটি প্রকাশ্য লেখাতে ব্যাখ্যা করিয়াছেন, “True Faith,” “Regenerating Faith,” এবং “God-vision in the Nineteenth Century”। আমাদের মধ্যে আজকালকার দর্শন শাস্ত্রবিৎ অনেক ব্রাহ্ম জিজ্ঞাসা করিয়া থাকেন, ব্রহ্ম সম্বন্ধে কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের কি মত ছিল, তিনি কি দ্বৈতবাদী না অদ্বৈতবাদী ছিলেন? না ইহার মাঝামাঝি কিছু একটা ছিলেন? প্রকৃত পক্ষে কেশবচন্দ্র সেন এই সকল মতের বিশেষ কোন ধার ধারিতেন না। তিনি দ্বৈতবাদী কি অদ্বৈতবাদী এই চিন্তায় কখনও প্রবৃত্ত হন নাই। দ্বৈতবাদ বলিতে যদি এই বুঝি যে ঈশ্বরও জগতে এক চিরন্তন বিরোধ রহিয়াছে, এবং ঈশ্বর ব্রহ্মাণ্ডকে সৃষ্টি করিয়া কতকগুলি নিয়মাধীন করিয়া দিয়াছেন, এক্ষণে আর তাঁহার সহিত সৃষ্টির বিশেষ কোন সম্বন্ধ নাই, তবে তিনি নিশ্চয়ই দ্বৈতবাদী ছিলেন না। চিরদিন এই মতের তিনি প্রতিবাদ করিয়াছেন। ঈশ্বর জগতে ওতপ্রোত-

ভাবে রহিয়াছেন। ইহা কেশবচন্দ্রের নিকট কেবল একটা গুহ্য দার্শনিক তত্ত্বের বিষয় ছিল না, কিন্তু সাক্ষাৎ প্রত্যক্ষ বিষয় হইয়াছিল। তিনি নিশ্চল বিশ্বাস চক্ষে জগতের প্রত্যেক পরমাণুতে ঈশ্বরের অস্তিত্ব ও আবির্ভাব দর্শন করিতেন। তাই বলিয়া কি তিনি অদ্বৈতবাদী হইয়াছিলেন? তাহা নহে। ভক্তি এবং প্রেম তাঁহাকে অদ্বৈতবাদের হস্ত হইতে মুক্ত করিয়াছিল। তিনি ব্রহ্মাণ্ডে এক মঙ্গলময় পুরুষের লীলা সর্বত্র দর্শন করিতেন। জড় বস্তু সকল তাঁহা হইতেই প্রসূত হইতেছে এবং তাঁহাতেই স্থিতি করিতেছে, তিনি গুহ্য নিরবয়ব হইয়া সতত এই জড়-জগতে ক্রীড়া করিতেছেন। জ্ঞান এবং ভক্তি উভয়ে একত্র হইয়া কেশবচন্দ্রকে এক দিকে ঘোরতর দ্বৈতবাদ এবং অপর দিকে ঘোরতর অদ্বৈতবাদের হস্ত হইতে রক্ষা করিয়াছিল। তিনি অধ্যাত্মিক অদ্বৈতবাদী ছিলেন এবং চিন্তাগত (Intellectual) অথবা Commonsense দ্বৈতবাদী ছিলেন, এই বলিলেই বোধ হয় তাঁহার ব্রহ্মতত্ত্ব যথাযথরূপে প্রকাশ করা হয়।

কেশবচন্দ্রের ব্রহ্মতত্ত্বে একটি ত্রিঈশ্বরবাদ (Trinity) আছে। এই ত্রিঈশ্বরবাদটির উপরে মনোনিবেশ না করিলে তাঁহার ব্রহ্মতত্ত্ব প্রকৃতরূপে পরিগ্রহ করা হয় না। ঈশ্বরের আত্ম-প্রকাশের উপরেই ব্রহ্ম-জ্ঞান নির্ভর করে। ঈশ্বর যদি আমাদের নিকটে আপনাকে প্রকাশ না করিতেন তবে আমরা তাঁহাকে কখনও জানিতে পারিতাম না। ঈশ্বরের আত্ম-প্রকাশ তিন ভাগে বিভক্ত। তিনি জড়-জগতে, আত্মা-রাজ্যে, এবং ইতিহাসে প্রকাশিত। এই তিনের ভিতর দিয়াই আমরা তাঁহার সহিত যোগে সাক্ষ্য হইয়া থাকি। জড়-জগতে তাঁহাকে জ্ঞান ও শক্তিরূপে দর্শন করি, আত্মা-রাজ্যে তাঁহার পুণ্যময়

প্রকাশ অবলোকন করি, এবং ইতিহাসে তাঁহার মঙ্গলময় লীলা দর্শন করিয়া ভক্তিরসে আপ্লুত হই। কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের ব্রহ্মতত্ত্বের একটি বিশেষত্ব এই যে তিনি ঈশ্বরের প্রথম প্রকাশ অপেক্ষা দ্বিতীয় এবং তৃতীয় প্রকাশে অধিকতর গুরুত্ব আরোপ করিয়াছিলেন। এই স্থলে রামমোহন রায়, দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর, ও কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের মধ্যে একটি বিশেষ পার্থক্য পরিলক্ষিত হয়। মহাত্মা রামমোহন রায় জড়-জগতে ঈশ্বরের প্রকাশকেই বিশেষ ভাবে অবলম্বন করিয়াছিলেন। মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ জীবাগ্নিতে পরমাত্মার প্রকাশই বিশেষ ভাবে অন্বেষণ করিলেন। এবং তৎপরে কেশবচন্দ্র সেন ইতিহাসে ঈশ্বরের প্রকাশ দেখিয়াই মুগ্ধ হইয়াছিলেন। আত্মা-রাজ্যে ঈশ্বরের প্রকাশ মহর্ষিই বিশেষ ভাবে ব্যাখ্যা করিয়াছেন। এই প্রকাশ কেশবচন্দ্রও পরিত্যাগ করেন নাই। তিনিও আত্মার ভিতরে পরমাত্মাকে দর্শন করিতে প্রয়াসী ছিলেন। কিন্তু এ বিষয়ে তাঁহাতে ও মহর্ষিতে একটি বিশেষ পার্থক্য আছে। মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ পরমাত্মাকে জীবাগ্নির প্রাণরূপেই কেবল দর্শন করিলেন। কেশবচন্দ্রের মতে পরমাত্মা কেবল আত্মার প্রাণ নহে, পরমাত্মা আত্মার পরিচালক, এবং ধর্মজীবনের পথ প্রদর্শক; অর্থাৎ কেশবচন্দ্র পরমাত্মাকে জীবাগ্নির বিবেকের ভিতর দিয়া দর্শন করিতেন। বিবেকে ব্রহ্ম-দর্শন কেশবচন্দ্রের একটি বিশেষ মত। বিবেকের পরিচালনা ঈশ্বরের আদেশ বলিয়া তিনি গ্রহণ করিলেন। এই আদেশ-বাদ ধর্মজীবনের প্রথম হইতেই তাঁহার জীবনে অবস্থিতি করিতেছিল। তিনি প্রথম হইতেই এই শিক্ষা দিয়াছেন যে ঈশ্বরের নিকট প্রার্থনা করিলে উত্তর পাওয়া যায়। সরল প্রার্থনা ও প্রত্যাদেশ (Inspiration) পরস্পর অভিন্নরূপে সহবদ্ধ,

ইহা তাঁহার “Inspiration” নামক বক্তৃতা পাঠ করিলেই পরিষ্কার বুঝিতে পারা যায়। যদিও ধর্মজীবনের প্রথম হইতেই এই মত কেশবচন্দ্র প্রচার করিয়াছেন, তথাপি তাঁহার জীবনের শেষ ভাগেই ইহার বিশেষ উৎকর্ষ দেখা গিয়াছে। তিনি ইহার এত দূর পক্ষপাতী হইয়াছিলেন যে ইহার নিকট আপনার জ্ঞান ও বুদ্ধিকে অনেক সময়ে বিসর্জন করিতে হইয়াছে। তিনি আবেশ-বাদ অপ্রতিহতরূপে প্রচার করিয়া গিয়াছেন। তাঁহার এই মতটি আমাদের বিশেষ চিন্তা করিয়া দেখা প্রয়োজন। জগতের প্রায় অধিকাংশ ধর্ম সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যেই দেখিতে পাওয়া যায় যে ঈশ্বর কোন বিশেষ সময়ে কোন বিশেষ মহাপুরুষের সহিত কথা কহিয়াছিলেন, এবং সে গুলি লিপিবদ্ধ হইয়া অত্রান্ত শাস্ত্ররূপে পরিণত হইয়াছে। কেশবচন্দ্র এই মতের দারুণ বিরোধী ছিলেন। ঈশ্বর ব্যক্তি বিশেষের পক্ষপাতী হইয়া তাঁহার সহিত কথা কহেন, তিনি ইহা ঘৃণাক্ষরেও মানিতেন না। ঈশ্বর জাতি ও ব্যক্তি নির্বিশেষে সকলের সহিতই কথা কহেন, সকলের বিবেকের ভিতর দিয়াই তিনি আদেশ ও উপদেশ প্রদান করিয়া থাকেন। শুধু তাহা নহে, ঈশ্বর অবিশ্রান্ত সর্বদাই সকলের নিকটে আদেশ প্রেরণ করিতেছেন। তিনি এখন কথা কহিলেন, আবার অল্প সময় কহিলেন না, নির্বাক হইয়া রহিলেন তাহা নহে। ঈশ্বর আত্মাতে ক্রমাগত তাঁহার ইচ্ছা পরিস্ফুট করিতেছেন। সিদ্ধাবস্থার পরিমাণ অনুসারে সাধক ঈশ্বরের ইচ্ছা বুঝিতে সমর্থ হন। জীবন স্বখন নির্মল হয়, ক্ষুটিল বুদ্ধি যখন তিরোহিত হয়, তখনই ঈশ্বরের ইচ্ছা আত্মায় উজ্জলরূপে প্রকাশিত হইয়া থাকে। জড়-জগতে ঈশ্বর যেমন অবিরাম কার্য্য করিতেছেন ও আপনার জ্ঞান-শক্তি প্রকাশ

করিতেছেন, তেমনি আত্ম-রাজ্যেও আপনার পুণ্যস্বরূপ প্রকাশ করিয়া থাকেন। কোন রাজ্যেই তাঁহার প্রকৃতিগত কার্যের বিরাম নাই। তিনি অনন্ত ক্রীয়াশীল পরমেশ্বর। কেশবচন্দ্র সেন এইরূপে অস্বাভাবিক গুরুবাদ একেবারে খণ্ডন করিলেন। গুরু প্রত্যেক হৃদয়ে নিত্যবিরাজমান। তাঁহার আদেশ শ্রবণ করাই জীবনের মুক্তির প্রকৃষ্ট উপায়।

কেশবচন্দ্রের মতে ঈশ্বরের তৃতীয় প্রকাশ ইতিহাসে। ইতিহাস তিন প্রকার; জড় ও প্রাণী-জগতের ইতিহাস, মনুষ্যের ব্যক্তিগত ইতিহাস, এবং মানব-সমাজের ইতিহাস। এই তিন প্রকার ইতিহাসেই ঈশ্বর প্রকাশিত। এ সকলের মধ্যেই তাঁহার লীলা দেখিতে পাওয়া যায়। বর্তমান সময়ের বিবর্তনবাদ, জড়-জগতে ঈশ্বরের লীলার সাক্ষ্য প্রদান করিতেছে। কেশবচন্দ্র সেন বিবর্তনবাদের পক্ষপাতী ছিলেন। তিনি ডারুইন্ প্রভৃতি পণ্ডিত দিগকে বিশেষ সম্মানের চক্ষে দর্শন করিতেন। তিনি বলিয়াছেন যে, তাঁহারা তাঁহার বিশেষ উপকার সাধন করিয়াছেন। ব্যক্তিগত ইতিহাসে অর্থাৎ প্রত্যেক ব্যক্তি আপনার জীবনের ঘটনাবলীমধ্যে কি প্রকারে ঈশ্বরের হস্ত দেখিতে সক্ষম, তাহা তিনি তাঁহার 'God vision in the Nineteenth Century' নামক বক্তৃতার শেষ ভাগে অতি হৃদয়গ্রাহীরূপে বর্ণন করিয়াছেন। তাহা পাঠ করিলে প্রত্যেক ধর্ম-পিপাসু ব্যক্তিরই উপকার সম্ভাবনা। আমরা স্বার্থপর ভাবে আমাদের দৈনিক খাওয়া পরা সুখ স্বচ্ছন্দতার ভিতরে কেবল নিজের হাতই দেখিতে পাই; কিন্তু বিশ্বাসী ব্যক্তি তাহার ভিতরে মঙ্গলময় বিধাতার প্রেম-বিধান দর্শন করিয়া কৃতার্থ হ'ন। এইরূপে জীবনের ক্ষুদ্র বৃহৎ প্রত্যেক



ঘটনার ভিতরে ঈশ্বরের হস্ত দেখিতে যত্নশীল হওয়া কর্তব্য। তাহা হইলেই এই বিপদসঙ্কুল পৃথিবীতে আমরা স্থির ভাবে দাঁড়াইতে সক্ষম হইতে পারি।

তৃতীয় প্রকার ইতিহাসে ঈশ্বরের প্রকাশ। মানব-সমাজের ইতিবৃত্ত কেবল কতকগুলি অর্থহীন ঘটনা পুঞ্জ নহে। সেই ঘটনা সমূহে বিধাতার হস্ত অবস্থিত করিতেছে এবং তদ্বারা ঘটনা সমূহ নিয়মিত হইতেছে। ইতিহাস, কেশবচন্দ্রের নিকট ঈশ্বরের বিধানই প্রকাশ করিয়াছে। কিন্তু বিধাতার বিধান ইতিহাসে কি প্রকারে ধরিব? জনসাধারণের মধ্যে কি? তাহা নহে। জনসাধারণের যাহারা নেতা তাঁহাদিগের মধ্যেই ঈশ্বরের বিধান বিশেষ ভাবে পরিলক্ষিত হয়। 'Jesus Christ, Europe and Asia' নামক বক্তৃতাতেই সর্ব প্রথমে এই মতের আভাস পাওয়া গিয়াছিল। তৎপর 'Great men' নামক বক্তৃতায় কেশবচন্দ্র ইহা স্পষ্টরূপে ব্যাখ্যা করিয়াছিলেন। তিনি এই মত মহাত্মা কার্লমাইলের নিকট হইতেই অনেকটা প্রাপ্ত হইয়াছিলেন বলিয়া মনে হয়। বস্তুতঃ কেশবচন্দ্র ও কার্লমাইলের মধ্যে এই বিষয়ে বিশেষ সৌসাদৃশ্য দেখিতে পাওয়া যায়। উভয়েই মহাপুরুষদিগকে বিশেষ সম্মানের চক্ষে দর্শন করিতেন। কেশবচন্দ্রের মতে মহাপুরুষদিগের দ্বারাই মানব-সমাজের উন্নতি ও পরিবর্তন সংসাধিত হয়। তাঁহারাই মানব-জাতির প্রতিনিধি হইয়া বিশেষ বিশেষ ভাব প্রচার করিয়াছেন ও তাহা সমাজ মধ্যে প্রবিষ্ট করাইয়াছেন। এই সকল ভাব তাঁহারা আপনার বুদ্ধি বলে নহে, ঈশ্বর-প্রসাদে লাভ করিয়াছিলেন। এইজন্যই কেশবচন্দ্র তাঁহাদের কার্য্য কেবল মানবীয় ক্ষমতা দর্শন করিতেন না, কিন্তু ঐশ্বরিক ভাব

ও শক্তি প্রত্যক্ষ করিতেন। মহাপুরুষগণ দশ জনের মধ্যে একজন, কেবল নিজের চেষ্টায় উন্নতাবস্থা লাভ করিয়াছিলেন, কেশবচন্দ্র এই মতের পক্ষপাতী ছিলেন না। মহাপুরুষদের মধ্যে ঈশ্বরের বিশেষ ইচ্ছা ও বিধান প্রকাশিত হইতেছে, তিনি ইহাই দেখিতেন। তাঁহারা সময়ের পূর্ণতায় বিশেষ কোন কার্য্য সংসিদ্ধ করিবার জন্ত প্রেরিত হইয়াছেন। অথচ ইহার ভিতরে অলৌকিক ব্যাপার কিছুই নাই। মহাপুরুষগণ ঈশ্বরের অবতার ইহা কেশবচন্দ্র কখনও মনে করিতেন না; তাঁহারা ঈশ্বরের প্রতিনিধি ইহাই তিনি বিশ্বাস করিতেন। ঈশা, মূষা, বুদ্ধ, মহম্মদ, শ্রীচৈতন্য ইহারা কখনও ঈশ্বরের অবতার নহেন; কিন্তু তাঁহার প্রেরিত পুরুষ। তাঁহাদের আগমন ও তাঁহাদের ধর্ম্ম ধুমকেতুর ত্রায় আকস্মিক ঘটনা নহে। কিন্তু তাহা ঈশ্বরের নিয়মাধীন হইয়াই সংঘটিত হইয়াছে। ভারতবর্ষীয়-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইবার পরেই কেশবচন্দ্র বিবিধ ধর্ম্ম-শাস্ত্র হইতে সত্য সংগ্রহ করিতে প্রবৃত্ত হইলেন। সকল ধর্ম্মেই সত্য আছে, তিনি তখন এই কথা বলিতেন। প্রচলিত ভাবে তাঁহার ভিতরে এই মতও বর্ত্তমান ছিল যে, সকল ধর্ম্মেই কেবল সত্য আছে তাহা নহে, সকল ধর্ম্মই সত্য। এই কথা কাহারও কাহারও নিকট অতীব বিস্ময়কর হইতে পারে, কিন্তু ইহার তাৎপর্য্য এই যে, প্রত্যেক ধর্ম্ম ঈশ্বরের বিধানে পৃথিবীতে আসিয়াছে। কাজে কাজেই কোন ধর্ম্মই সম্পূর্ণরূপে ভ্রমাত্মক ও পরিত্যাজ্য হইতে পারে না। প্রত্যেক ধর্ম্মেই ভ্রম প্রমাদ রহিয়াছে তাহাতে সন্দেহ নাই এবং সেই সকল ভ্রম ও কুসংস্কার সর্ব্বথা পরিবর্জনীয়। প্রত্যেক ধর্ম্মের মূলীভূত সত্য ঈশ্বর প্রেরিত সত্য এবং তাহা অপরিত্যাজ্য। এইমত সাধারণ—ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইবার পূর্বে বিশেষরূপে

প্রচারিত হয় নাই। কিন্তু ইহা “নববিধান” ঘোষণার সময় হইতেই বিশেষভাবে প্রচারিত হইয়াছে। কেশবচন্দ্র পুরাতন ধর্ম সকলের মধ্যে শুধু ভিন্ন ভিন্ন ভাবে ঈশ্বরের বিধাতৃত্ব দর্শন করিতেন তাহা নহে, সেই সকলের ভিতরে বিধানের শৃঙ্খলাও দেখিতেন। প্রত্যেক ধর্মবিধান পূর্ববর্তী বিধানের সহিত গূঢ়ভাবে সংবদ্ধ। একটি আর একটিকে ছাড়িয়া পৃথিবীতে আসে নাই, প্রত্যেক বিধান তৎপূর্ববর্তী বিধানেরই পূর্ণতা। এই মতটি তিনি “We the Apostles of the New Dispensation” বক্তৃতাতে ব্যাখ্যা করিয়াছেন। এস্থলে বলা আবশ্যক যে, তিনি বিধান সমূহের শৃঙ্খলা এবং ক্রম-বিকাশ যথাযথরূপে প্রদর্শন করিতে সমর্থ হন নাই। তাঁহার ভাবপ্রধান মন এই প্রকার নির্দ্বারকের ঠিক উপযোগী ছিল না। তিনি এই কাজটি ভাবুকতা দ্বারাই সম্পন্ন করিতে প্রয়াসী হইয়াছিলেন; বাস্তবিক তাহা হইবার নহে। ইহাতে বিজ্ঞান ও ঐতিহাসিক ঘটনা নিচয়ের পরিস্কার জ্ঞান থাকা আবশ্যক। যাহা হউক স্থূলতঃ ধরিতে গেলে তিনি একটি গুরুতর এবং সময়োপযোগী মতেরই অবতারণা করিয়াছিলেন। আজকালকার অনেক বৈজ্ঞানিক ও দার্শনিকের ভিতরেও এই মত দেখিতে পাওয়া যায়। হিগেলের (যাঁহার নাম পুর্কেই করিয়াছি) এই মত ছিল। ব্রাহ্মধর্ম এই বিধান-শৃঙ্খলার বহির্ভূত একটি ঘটনা নহে। বর্তমান যুগে একটি নূতন বিধান এবং পূর্ববর্তী বিধান সকলের পূর্ণতা সম্পাদন করিতেই ইহার আগমন। ইহা মনুষ্য রচিত ধর্ম নহে। “রামমোহন রায়, দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর অথবা কেশবচন্দ্র স্বীয় বুদ্ধিবলে ভারতবর্ষে এই ধর্ম আনয়ন করিয়াছেন,” এই মত কেশবচন্দ্র সেন ঘূণার সহিত অগ্রাহ্য করিয়াছিলেন। “ব্রাহ্মধর্ম

ঈশ্বরের এক নূতন বিধান” শেষ জীবনে কেশবচন্দ্র এই ভাব লইয়া একেবারে উন্মত্ত হইয়াছিলেন। অত্যাশ্চর্য্য ধর্ম্ম সকল যেমন ঈশ্বরের বিধান, এই ধর্ম্মও তেমনি ঈশ্বরের বিধান; ইহাও সময়ের পূর্ণতায় ভারতবর্ষে অভ্যাদিত হইয়াছে। বস্তুতঃ শিক্ষিত লোকদিগের মধ্যে অনেকের এই প্রকার ধারণা যে, ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্ম একটি দার্শনিক ধর্ম্ম, ইহা স্মৃতিস্মৃতি চিন্তাশক্তি হইতেই প্রসূত হইয়াছে; পূর্বাগত ঐতিহাসিক ঘটনা সমূহের সহিত ইহার বিশেষ কোন সম্বন্ধ নাই। কেশবচন্দ্রের বিধানের মত এই কুসংস্কারের বিরুদ্ধে সমর ঘোষণা করিয়াছিল। তিনি দেখাইতে চেষ্টা করিয়াছিলেন যে, ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্ম স্বয়ং বিধাতার লীলা, ইহা মনুষ্য-রচিত ধর্ম্ম নহে। ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্ম ঈশ্বরের বিধান, এই কথাটি প্রত্যেক ব্রাহ্মেরই স্বীকার্য্য; নতুবা ইহাদ্বারা কি করিয়া তিনি আপনার পরিব্রাজ সাধন করিতেছেন। কিন্তু “নূতন” এই কথাটির প্রতিকূলের অনেকে আপত্তি করিয়া থাকেন। কেশবচন্দ্রের মতে ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্ম একদিকে দেখিতে গেলে সার্বভৌমিক ধর্ম্ম সন্দেহ নাই এবং ইহা অনন্তকাল হইতেই পৃথিবীতে স্থিতি করিতেছে। ইহা সার্বভৌমিক, কেননা এই ধর্ম্ম মানব-জাতির সাধারণ ধর্ম্মভাবের উপরে প্রতিষ্ঠিত। আর একদিকে দেখিতে গেলে ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্মের বিশেষত্ব আছে, নূতনত্বও আছে। সেই বিশেষত্ব ও নূতনত্ব কি? সামঞ্জস্যই ইহার নূতনত্ব। পৃথিবীতে আজ পর্য্যন্ত যে সকল ধর্ম্ম-বিধান অভ্যাদিত হইয়াছে, ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্মে সমুদয়ের সামঞ্জস্য হইয়াছে এবং হইতেছে। ইহাই ইহার নূতনত্ব এবং বিশেষত্ব। ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্ম একাঙ্গীণ সাধনের ধর্ম্ম নহে, ইহা পূর্ণাঙ্গ সাধনের ও পূর্ণ বিকাশের ধর্ম্ম। যাহারা এই আদর্শকে মতে অথবা কার্য্যে পরিত্যাগ করেন, তাঁহারা ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্মের প্রকৃত

তাৎপর্য্য বুঝিতে সক্ষম হন নাই। তাঁহার ঈশ্বরের বিধানকে জীবনে অবলম্বন করিতে সমর্থ হন নাই। প্রকৃত পক্ষে তাঁহার ঈশ্বরের ইচ্ছার বিরুদ্ধে দণ্ডায়মান হইয়াছেন। আমাদের দুর্বলতা বশতঃ এই আদর্শ অক্ষুণ্ণ রাখিতে সক্ষম না হইতে পারি, কিন্তু কখনও ইহা পরিত্যাগ করিতে পারি না। সমুদয় ধর্ম্ম-বিধান ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্ম সামঞ্জস্য করিতেছে, এই কথাটি লইয়া অনেক বাগ্বিতণ্ডা হইয়া গিয়াছে। “কোথায় সে সামঞ্জস্য, আমরা তো তাহার কিছুই দেখিতে পাই না, কেশবচন্দ্র সেন একটা মনঃকল্পিত ব্যাপার লইয়া কতকটা গোলমাল করিয়া গিয়াছেন” এইরূপ অনেকে বলিয়া থাকেন। কিন্তু ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্মে সমুদয় ধর্ম্ম-বিধান সামঞ্জস্য হইতেছে কি না, তাহা প্রমাণ করিতে হইলে প্রত্যেক ব্রাহ্ম-জীবন, বিশেষতঃ কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবন, বিশেষভাবে পাঠ করা প্রয়োজন। তাহা হইলেই আমরা দেখিতে পাইব যে, ইহা একটা মনঃকল্পিত ব্যাপার নহে, বিধাতার বিধানে ইহা বাস্তবিকই সংঘটিত হইয়াছে। প্রত্যেক ব্রাহ্ম-জীবন অস্বাভাবিক পরিমাণে এই সামঞ্জস্যের সাক্ষ্য প্রদান করিতেছে। এই নূতন ধর্ম্মে ঈশ্বার বিশ্বাস, প্রার্থনা ও কার্য্যশীলতা, শাক্যমুনির যোগ, খ্রীষ্টোত্তর যুগের ভক্তি এবং মহান্দের উৎসাহ ও তেজ কতক পরিমাণে সম্মিলিত হইয়াছে। এই সম্মিলন, যাহা ভারতবর্ষে এক অভিনব ব্যাপার, তাহার ভিতরে কি আমরা বিধাতার হস্ত নিরীক্ষণ করিব না? কেশবচন্দ্র চিন্তা ও লেখনী দ্বারা সর্ব্বধর্ম্ম সমন্বয় সপ্রমাণ করিতে কখনও সচেষ্ট হন নাই। তিনি নিজের ও অগ্রাগ্র ব্রাহ্মের জীবন, চরিত্র দ্বারাই ইহা সপ্রমাণ করিতে প্রয়াসী হইয়াছিলেন। তিনি ইহাতে কৃতকার্য্য হইয়াছিলেন কিনা, তাহা কেবল তাঁহার জীবন,

নিরপেক্ষভাবে আলোচনা করিলেই বুঝিতে পারা যায়। যাহা হউক ব্রাহ্মধর্ম ঈশ্বরের বিধান, এটি ব্রাহ্মের নিকটে যারপর নাই আশাপ্রদ ও উচ্চভাব। কেশবচন্দ্র যেমন ব্রাহ্মধর্মে ও ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে ঈশ্বরের হস্ত দেখিতে যত্নশীল ছিলেন, আমরা প্রত্যেকেই যদি সেইরূপ হই, তবে ব্রাহ্মধর্মের প্রতি আমাদের আকর্ষণ শতগুণ বাড়িয়া যায়। প্রকৃত পক্ষে, ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে যোগ দিয়া যদি অবিশ্বাসীরা ত্রায় বিচরণ করি এবং বলিয়া বেড়াই যে, ব্রাহ্মধর্ম কিছুই করে নাই ও কিছুই করিতেছে না, তাহা হইলে আমাদের ত্রায় হতভাগ্য আর কে হইতে পারে? এই অর্কশতাকীর মধ্যে ভারতবর্ষে ব্রাহ্মধর্মের নামে যে মাহাব্যাপার সংসাধিত হইয়াছে, তাহা আমরা অনিশ্বাসী হইয়া নাও দেখিতে পারি, কিন্তু তাহা আমাদের ভবিষ্যৎবংশীয়েরা দেখিয়া অবাক ও ভক্তিরসে আল্লুত হইবে। কেশবচন্দ্র যে সকল কীর্তি রাখিয়া গিয়াছেন তন্মধ্যে “ব্রাহ্মধর্ম ঈশ্বরের বিধান” এই ভাবটি সর্বোচ্চ কীর্তি। খ্রীষ্ট এবং খ্রীষ্টধর্ম সম্বন্ধে তিনি অনেক কথা বলিয়া গিয়াছেন, তাহারও কিছুই, আলোচনা করা হইল না। তাঁহার সমুদয় মত বিশদরূপে ব্যাখ্যা করিতে হইলে একখানা ক্ষুদ্র পুস্তক রচনার প্রয়োজন। আশা করি কালক্রমে ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে তাহা হইবে।

উপসংহারে কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবন কি প্রকারে আলোচনা করা প্রয়োজন তাহা সংক্ষেপে নিবেদন করিতেছি। কোন একটি জীবন আলোচনা করিতে হইলে একদিগে বিদ্বৎ এবং অপরদিগে নর পূজার ভাব পরিত্যাগ করা সর্বতোভাবে আবশ্যিক। বিদ্বৎপরায়ণ হইলে কোন সাধুর জীবনই আমাদের নিকট শিক্ষাপ্রদ হইতে পারে না, তাঁহার মহত্ত্বাবলি মেঘাচ্ছন্ন হইয়া থাকিবে এবং দোষ, ত্রুটিগুলি

বৃহদাকারে প্রকাশিত হইয়া পড়িবে। অপরদিকে অস্বাভাবিক আসক্তি থাকিলে দোষ ক্রটির প্রতি সম্পূর্ণ উদাসীন হইয়া পড়িতে হয়। তাহার ফল এই হয় যে, উচ্চভাব গুলিকেও যথাযথরূপে বুঝিতে পারা যায় না, সানাত্ত্ব সদৃশ ও অমানুষিক স্বর্গীয় ভাব বলিয়া অনুভূত হয়। (দুর্ভাগ্যক্রমে ব্রাহ্ম সাধারণের মধ্যে কেশবচন্দ্রের সম্বন্ধে এই দুই ভাবই বর্তমান। কেহ কেহ তাঁহাকে সম্পূর্ণরূপে অগ্রাহ্য করিতেছেন, আবার কেহ বা তাঁহাকে দেবতার আসন দান করিতেছেন। উভয় দিকেই ভ্রমাত্মকতা এবং সত্যানুরাগের অভাব।) ঠিকভাবে কেশবচন্দ্রকে বুঝিব এই ভাব অতি অল্পলোকের মধ্যেই দেখিতে পাওয়া যায়। তাঁহার ভিতরে যদি ভ্রম ও ক্রটি থাকে তাহা প্রকাশ করিতে কুণ্ঠিত এবং লজ্জিত হইবার প্রয়োজন কি? ভ্রম ক্রটি তো থাকিবেই থাকিবে। বাস্তবিক সেগুলি যদি আমি পরিষ্কাররূপে না বুঝিয়া থাকি, তাহা হইলে জানিতে হইবে যে, গুণ গুলিও আমি বুঝি নাই। আমদিগের জ্ঞানের প্রকৃতিই এই যে, উহা দোষ গুণের তুলনা দ্বারাই সত্য নির্ণয় করিয়া থাকে। সত্যই বাস্তবিক আমদিগের লক্ষ্য। কোনও ব্যক্তি বিশেষকে মহীয়ান্ করিতে আমরা আসি নাই। একমাত্র পরমেশ্বরই ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে মহীয়ান্ হইবেন। আর সকলেই তাঁহার দাসানুদাস। বাস্তবিক যদি দেখিতে পাওয়া যায় যে, ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ কোন ব্যক্তি বিশেষের প্রতি অনুচিত সমাদর করিতে গিয়া সত্যের পথ হইতে ভ্রষ্ট হইতেছে, তাহা হইলেই দুঃখ ও ক্ষোভ রাখিবার আর স্থান হয় না। কেশবচন্দ্র ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে দশজনের মধ্যে একজন, ঈশ্বর প্রসাদে তিনি প্রভুতশক্তি এবং ধর্ম্যভাব লাভ করিয়াছিলেন। আমরা সেইজন্ত তাঁহাকে যথোচিত সম্মান ও ভক্তি প্রদান করিব।

এমন সময় আসিয়াছে যে, কেশবচন্দ্র সেনের জীবন স্মৃতিভাবে আলোচনা করা প্রয়োজন। ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে বর্তমান সময়ে যে নানা-প্রকার মত-বিভাগ দেখিতে পাওয়া যায় তাহার অনেকগুলি কেশবচন্দ্র সম্বন্ধীয়। ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে শান্তি সংস্থাপন করিতে হইলে তাঁহার সম্বন্ধে মত-বিভাগ যতই বিলুপ্ত হয় ততই ভাল। প্রকৃতপক্ষে মত-বিভাগ দূর করিবার জগুই যে কেবল কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবন আলোচনা করা প্রয়োজন তাহা নহে। ইঁহার জীবনে ব্রহ্মধর্মের আদর্শ এতই পরিষ্কাররূপে প্রস্ফুটিত হইয়াছিল যে, ব্রাহ্ম মাত্রেরই তাহা পরিষ্কাররূপে অনুভব করা উচিত; এবং তদ্বারা ব্রাহ্মজীবনের উন্নতি নিশ্চয়ই সংসিদ্ধ হইবার সম্ভাবনা। অতএব আশাকরি কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবন ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে এখন হইতে বহুলরূপে আলোচিত হইবে।



# KESHUB ANNIVERSARY

(8th, January 1910)

*Extract from*

PANDIT S. N. SHASTRI'S SPEECH

## কেশবচন্দ্রের দ্বারা ভারত উদ্ধার

যদা যদাহি ধর্ম্মশ্চ গ্লানির্ভবতি ।

অভ্যুত্থানমধর্ম্মশ্চ তদাত্মানঃ সৃজাম্যহম্ ॥

যুগে যুগে যখন মানব-সমাজে ধর্ম্মের হীনতা উপস্থিত হয়, পাপ চুরাচারের প্রাদুর্ভাব হয়, তখন ভগবান এক একজন মহাত্মাকে প্রেরণ করিয়া সমাজের দুর্গতি নিবারণ করেন ।

মানবমণ্ডলীকে চারি শ্রেণীতে বিভক্ত করা যাইতে পারে । যথা—ইন্দ্রিয়পরায়ণ, জ্ঞানগর্ভিত, বৈরাগী এবং প্রেরিত মহাজন । ঈশার সময়ে জুডিয়া দেশে প্রাপ্তকৃত তিন শ্রেণীর লোকই ছিলেন । তন্মধ্যে বৈরাগ্য প্রধান জোহন দি ব্যাপ্টিষ্ট পাপাসক্ত এবং কপট ধার্ম্মিকদিগকে ভৎসনা করিতেন । প্রেরিত মহাজন ঈশা দেখিলেন, আশু-সুখবিলাস এবং ধর্ম্মাভিমানকে কেবল নিন্দা করিলে হইবে না ; কিন্তু ঈশ্বরকে লাভ করিয়া যাহাতে মানবাত্মা নিত্যসুখ ও পরম তৃপ্তি লাভ করিতে পারে তাহার উপায় করিতে হইবে । এইজন্য ঈশ্বরপ্রেমোন্নততার জীবন্ত দৃষ্টান্ত তিনি তাঁহার জীবন মৃত্যু দ্বারা প্রদর্শন করিলেন । এই নিয়ম সকল দেশেই কার্য্য করিয়াছে ।

আরব দেশে মহম্মদের জন্ম হইয়াছিল এইজন্ত। এইরূপে যখন ভারতের পশ্চিম প্রদেশ পাঞ্জাব ঘোরতর দুর্গতিতে নিপতিত হইয়াছিল, তখন গুরু নানকের অভ্যুত্থান হইয়াছিল। বঙ্গদেশ যখন ঘোর তমসার্চ্ছন্ন হইয়াছিল, তখন শ্রীচৈতন্যের সমুত্থান হইয়াছিল। আবার চারিশত বর্ষ পরে যখন বঙ্গভূমি—ভারতভূমি পতিতদশাপন্ন, তখন এখানে মহাপুরুষদের সমাগম হইল। আজ যাহার প্রতি শ্রদ্ধা প্রদর্শনের জন্ত আমরা এখানে সমাগত, তিনি সেই শ্রেণীর একজন মহাপুরুষ। প্রথম যৌবনে তিনি সংসারের ভোগ-বাসনা পরিত্যাগ করিয়া ভগবানের প্রেমস্রোতে জীবন ভাসাইয়া দিলেন। রামকমল সেনের পৌত্র কেশবচন্দ্র সাংসারিক প্রতিপত্তি চাহিলে, নিশ্চয় তাহা তাঁহার করতলস্থ হইত, ইহাতে সন্দেহ নাই। তাঁহার অভিভাবকগণ বেঙ্গলব্যাক্ষে সামান্য কার্যে তাঁহাকে বসাইয়া দিয়াছিলেন। সেখানে তিনি আপন কর্তব্য কার্য সম্পন্ন করিয়া যেটুকু সময় পাইতেন, তাহা স্বদেশের হিতচিন্তায় ব্যয় করিতেন। সেই সময়ে তিনি “Young Bengal, This Is For You” নামক ট্রাক্ট বাহির করেন। স্বদেশ-বাসীর সমক্ষে নূতন আদর্শ চরিত্র ধরিতে আরম্ভ করেন। তখন হইতে চেষ্টা করিলে তিনি বেঙ্গলব্যাক্ষের শীর্ষস্থান অধিকার করিতে পারিতেন, তাহাতে বিন্দুমাত্র সন্দেহ নাই। কিন্তু তিনি সে পথে গেলেন না। বিধাতা তাঁহার দ্বারা ভারত উদ্ধারের উপায় করিবেন, মৃত সমাজে নূতন জীবন সঞ্চার করিবেন, তাই কেশবচন্দ্র বিষয়কর্ম পরিত্যাগ করিয়া আপনার জীবনের মহৎ উদ্দেশ্য সাধনে প্রাণমন উৎসর্গ করিলেন। ঐহিক সুখের আশায় জলাঞ্জলি দিয়া তিনি সম্যকরূপে ঈশ্বরের শরণাপন্ন হইয়াছিলেন, তাহাতে তাঁহার কি লাভ

( ৬৮ )

হইয়াছিল? গৃহ হইতে নির্বাসন, ধর্মবন্ধুদের দ্বারা বর্জন, সাধারণের নির্যাতন। কিন্তু এ সকল নিষ্ঠুর ব্যবহারের মধ্যে তাঁহার অসামান্য সহিষ্ণুতা ও ক্ষমা এবং প্রভু পরমেশ্বরে তাঁহার একান্ত নির্ভর তাঁহার মহত্বের পরিচায়ক।

## KESHUB ANNIVERSARY MEETING

At the Scottish College on 8th January, 1910.

### RABINDRANATH'S PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

#### কেশবচন্দ্র সম্বন্ধে বিরোধ-ভঞ্জন

যিনি বিধাতা, তিনি বিধান ক'ল্লেন, তিনি কবি—আনন্দে সমস্ত বিশ্বসংসারকে সৃষ্টি ক'ল্লেন। তিনি মনীষী—মনকে তিনি শাসন ক'ল্লেন। অব্যাহত তাঁর কবিত্ব প্রকাশ হ'চ্ছে তাঁর সৃষ্টিতে, তাঁর ঐশী শক্তি প্রকাশ হ'চ্ছে আমাদের মনের মধ্যে। আমাদের ইচ্ছার উপর তাঁর ইচ্ছা জয়ী হ'চ্ছে, তাই তিনি মনীষী। তিনি কবি ও মনীষী। তাঁর বিধান অনন্তকালের বিধান, সেই কথা যে মহাপুরুষ (কেশবচন্দ্র) প্রকাশ ক'রেছেন, সর্বোচ্চ বাণী তিনি জীবনের মধ্য দিয়ে নূতন ক'রে প্রকাশ ক'রেছেন। “নববিধান” পুরাতনকে নূতন ক'রে গ্রহণ ক'রে প্রকাশ করা। কোনও পুরাতন জিনিষকে যখন নূতন ক'রে কেউ দেখতে চাইবে না, কখনও তারা সেই জিনিষে কিছু নূতন দেখতে পারেন না। প্রভাতকাল অতি পুরাতন, দিবা, রাত্রি, সূর্য্য, চন্দ্র, গ্রহমণ্ডল অতি পুরাতন, প্রত্যহ আসা যাওয়া ক'চ্ছে। কিন্তু কবি যখন একদিন প্রভাতকে নূতন ভাবে দেখতে পান, তখন তিনি মনে করেন এ বুঝি কখনও আগে দেখেননি, এমনটি বুঝি কেউ কখনও দেখেনি। ভারতবর্ষে যে সাধনা করে সে সত্যকে লাভ ক'রেছে, আমরা বলব তিনি তা গ্লান ক'তে দাঁড়িয়েছেন? আমরা

বিরোধ দ্বারা কিছুতেই তাঁকে গ্রহণ ক'তে পার্কে না। আমরা অত্র ধর্মকে ঘৃণা ক'তে আরম্ভ ক'রেছি, সেই সত্যের বিদ্রোহ পতাকা আমরা তুলেছি, যিনি সে সত্য প্রচার ক'তে দাঁড়িয়েছেন তাঁকে আমরা শত্রু ব'লে মনে ক'রি। গুরু নানক, মহম্মদ প্রভৃতিকেও বিরুদ্ধবাদী ব'লে মনে ক'রেছি। আমাদের যেটুকু সাধনা, সেটুকু নিয়েই আমরা নিজের ধর্মমন্দিরের মধ্যে, নিজের গণ্ডীর মধ্যে আবদ্ধ থাকি। তাতে আর কাঁককে প্রবেশ ক'তে দিই না, তা নিয়ে আর কোন স্থানে যাই না। যিনি সত্যস্বরূপ, তাঁকে সকল ধর্মের মধ্যে প্রকাশ করা, গ্রহণ করা এই কথা সত্য, ব্রহ্মানন্দের মনের কথা, এবং তাই নূতন ক'রে তিনি লাভ ক'রে “নববিধান” ব'লে প্রকাশ ক'রেছেন। এ যখন বুঝলাম, সে বিরোধ আমার ঘুচে গেল। আমি তাই আজ তাঁকে ভক্তি নিবেদন ক'তে এসেছি।

(Dharmatattwa, Magh 12, 1266, Bengali edition)

## ব্রহ্মানন্দ কেশবচন্দ্র

(৮ই জানুয়ারী, ১৯৩৩, সাপ্তাহিক মৃত্যুদিন উপলক্ষে, রেঙ্গুন

ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ-মন্দিরে শ্রীমতি মুক্তা রত্ন কর্তৃক পঠিত)

রজনীর শেষে উষার প্রথম জ্যোতিরন্মেষের গ্রায় রাজা রামমোহন প্রথম ‘একমেবাদ্বিতীয়ম্’ মন্ত্র ঘোষণা করিয়াছিলেন যে দেশে; মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঋষিভ্য লাভ করিয়াছিলেন যে দেশে; পাগ্লা নিমাই আপনি পাগল হইয়া দেশশুদ্ধ ক্ষেপাইয়া তুলিয়া ছিলেন, আপনি চোখের জলে ভাসিয়া সকলকে কাঁদাইয়া আকুল করিয়াছিলেন যে দেশে; রামকৃষ্ণ পরমহংসের সরল অনাড়ম্বর জীবন একটি পদ্মফুলের মত বুকভরা মধু লইয়া, দেশ-বিদেশ দূর-দূরান্তর সৌরভে আমোদিত করিয়া ফুটিয়া উঠিয়াছিল যে দেশে—সেই দেশে, সেই আকাশের তলে, সেই জলে মাটিতে গত শতাব্দীতে আর একটি সুন্দর জীবন ফুটিয়াছিল, আর একটি বিশাল প্রাণ স্পন্দিত হইয়াছিল, আর একটি বিশ্বাসী ব্যাকুল আত্মা জাগিয়াছিল, আর একটি বাণী উথিত হইয়াছিল, যাহাতে সকল যুগের সকল দেশের সাধক ও ভক্তের কথার প্রতিধ্বনি শোনা গিয়াছিল।

প্রকৃতির নানা বিচিত্রতার মধ্যে আশ্চর্য্য অদৃশ্য এক শক্তির লীলা দেখিয়া মুগ্ধ বিস্মিত ভীত মানুষ প্রথমে প্রকৃতি পূজা করিতে আরম্ভ করিয়াছিল। আমরা প্রকৃতিকে পূজা দিই না; কিন্তু যে কৌশলী যাদুকর প্রকৃতির রঙ্গমঞ্চে মায়া পর মায়া জাল বুনিতেছেন,

তাঁহাকে আমরা প্রণাম করি। জড় শক্তির কারখানায় দৈবশক্তির বিকাশ দেখিয়া আমরা বিস্মিত হইয়া চাহিয়া থাকি। কিন্তু যেদিন মানব-জীবনের সেই দৈবশক্তির বিকাশ দেখিতে আসি, সেদিনই আমাদের মহা উৎসবের দিন।

অনেক দিন আগে এমন একটি দিনে ব্রহ্মানন্দ কেশবচন্দ্র দেহত্যাগ করিয়াছিলেন। আজ সেই ঘটনা স্মরণ করিয়া এখানে সকলে মিলিত হইয়াছি। এই মহাপুরুষকে পাওয়া যখন আমাদের দেশের দরকার ছিল; তখনি ভগবান্ তাঁহাকে পাঠাইয়াছিলেন; কিন্তু যখন তাঁহাকে তুলিয়া লইলেন, তখন কি দেশের পক্ষে তাঁহার প্রয়োজন ফুরাইয়া গিয়াছিল? বয়সের মধ্য পথে, জীবনের মধ্যাহ্নেই তিনি বিদায় গ্রহণ করিয়াছিলেন না কি? কিন্তু সেই আশ্রয়স্থান জীবনেই তিনি জীবনের পূজা সমাপ্ত করিয়া গিয়াছিলেন। জীবন-দেবতার প্রসাদ জীবন ভরিয়া পইয়া ছিলেন; এবং সংসার হইতে বিদায় লইবার সময় শিষ্যদের হাতে সেই একমাত্র সম্পদ সমর্পণ করিয়া গিয়াছিলেন। যাহা বলিবার বলিয়া গিয়াছেন, যাহা করিবার করিয়া গিয়াছেন, যাহা দিবার দিয়া গিয়াছেন, যাহা দেখাইবার দেখাইয়া গিয়াছেন।

কেশবচন্দ্রের সমস্ত জীবনবৃত্তান্ত আমি আলোচনা করিব না—পারিবও না। আমি মূর্খ মেয়ে, ইতিহাস আমার জানা নাই, জীবন-চরিত সমালোচনা করিবার মত বুদ্ধি বিবেচনা কিছুই নাই। আমি দরিদ্র, আমি সঞ্চয় করিতে পারি নাই, আমি কি দান করিব? তবু আসিয়াছি, আমার সতীর্থ ধর্মবন্ধুদের মেলায়, আমার শ্রদ্ধাস্পদ জ্ঞানবৃদ্ধ সমাজপতিদের সভায়—আমি আমার শিক্ষার্থী জিজ্ঞাসু মন লইয়া সসঙ্কোচে সবিনয়ে সকলের মধ্যে একটু ঠাঁই করিয়া লইয়াছি, আমিও

কিছু দিতে চাই বলিয়া। এই শ্রদ্ধাবাসরে আমার অতি সামান্য একমুঠি সঞ্চয় সেই মহান্ আত্মাকে স্মরণ করিয়া উৎসর্গ করিয়া দিব। এই ভারতের আকাশে একদিন যে উজ্জ্বল জ্যোতিষ্ক উদিত হইয়াছিল, এক ভক্ত পুরুষ নিজের জীবনকে বিশ্বেশ্বরের দেবালয়ে আরতির দীপ করিয়া তুলিয়া ধরিয়াছিলেন, তাঁহার প্রতি সম্মান প্রদর্শন করিবার জন্ত কয়েকটি শ্রদ্ধাশীল চিত্ত যে দীপাবলী জ্বালাইয়া আজ পূজার আয়োজন করিয়াছেন, আমিও তাহার মধ্যে আমার ক্ষুদ্র দীপশিখাটুকু আনিয়াছি। কালের সাগরের এপারে দাঁড়াইয়া ওপারের উদ্দেশে আমার প্রদীপ ভাসাইয়া দিব।

আমাদের এ যুগের ধর্মজীবন, আমাদের এ যুগের সামাজিক জীবন, গত যুগের কেশবচন্দ্রের নিকট অপরিশোধ্য স্বর্ণে স্বর্ণী। তিনি যে অধিকার, যে স্বাধীনতা, যে উদার বিশ্বজনীন ধর্ম দান করিয়া গিয়াছেন, যে অমৃত উৎসের সন্ধান বলিয়া দিয়াছেন, এ দেশ শতাব্দীর পর শতাব্দী ধরিয়া তাঁহারই সাধনা করিবে। যুগপুরু রাজা রামমোহন রায় যে আদর্শ নির্দেশ করিয়া গিয়াছেন, এই তেজস্বী বীরপুরুষ তাহাকে নিজের জীবনে অনুষ্ঠিত করিয়াছিলেন। ইঁহাকে সত্যবীর অথবা ধর্মবীর বলা যায়। উচিত বলিয়া, ধর্ম বলিয়া, যাহা বুঝিয়া-ছিলেন, বিরোধ বিদ্রোহ—গুরুজনের বিরাগ, প্রিয়জনের অসন্তোষ—সব অগ্রাহ্য করিয়া তাহাকেই শিরোধার্য্য করিয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার এই চরিত্রই ভারতবর্ষীয়-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ সৃষ্টি করিয়াছিল। তাঁহার এই চরিত্রই আমাদের সমাজের শরীর হইতে জাতিবর্ণভেদ রূপ কুসংস্কারের আগাছা উৎপাটিত করিয়া দিয়াছে, নারীগণের ধর্মচর্চার পথ সরল করিয়া দিয়াছে।



তাঁহার চরিত্রের আর একটা বিশেষত্ব ছিল যে, তিনি আজীবন ছাত্র ছিলেন। তিনি বলিয়াছিলেন, এমন কোন লোকের সংস্পর্শে তিনি আসেন নাই, যাহার নিকট হইতে তিনি কিছুই আকর্ষণ করিয়া লন নাই। অপরের সাধুভাব তিনি সহজেই আত্মসাৎ করিতে পারিতেন। বেদ, বাইবেল, কোরাণ, পুরাণের সমস্ত তাঁহার জীবনে ঘটিয়াছিল। তাঁহার জীবনের প্রাঙ্গণে দৈশা, মুয়া, বুদ্ধ, শ্রীচৈতন্য এক চন্দ্রাতপতলে মিলিত হইয়াছিলেন। রাজা রামমোহন সর্কধর্মসম্বন্ধের দৈববাণী ঘোষণা করিয়া গিয়াছিলেন—কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবনে বিভিন্ন কালের বিভিন্ন ধর্মমতসাধনার একত্র সমাবেশ প্রত্যক্ষ হইল। এই একটি আশ্চর্য্য জীবন—যাহাতে খৃষ্টের প্রার্থনাপরায়ণতা, পাপবোধ ও ক্ষমা-ভিক্ষার ভাব, বুদ্ধের কঠোর তপস্তা ও বিবেকানুগতা, এবং শ্রীচৈতন্যের ভক্তি, প্রেম ও অশ্রুর বত্ম—এই সমস্ত ভাবগুলি পাশাপাশি ফুটিয়া উঠিয়াছিল। একটি ভাবের আওতায় পড়িয়া আর একটি ভাব শুকাইয়া যায় নাই—সবগুলিই সমান বিকাশ লাভ করিয়াছিল। অপূর্ণ! চমৎকার !!

কতকগুলি অমানুষিক শক্তি ও গুণ সঙ্গে লইয়াই তিনি পৃথিবীতে আসিয়াছিলেন। তাঁহার আকৃতি যেমন মনোহর ছিল, তাঁহার প্রকৃতিও তেমনি মুগ্ধকর ছিল। কি যেন যাহুমঙ্গলের প্রভাবে তিনি মানুষের হৃদয় বশ করিতেন। তৎকালীন বাঙ্গালী সমাজের মনোবৃত্তির গতি, চিন্তার ধারা, ধর্মসাধনার রূপ সবই তিনি সহসা বদলাইয়া দিলেন। কে ভাবিতে পারিয়াছিল, নব্যশিক্ষিত মার্জিতবুদ্ধি পাশ্চাত্য-সভ্যতার ছাপমারা যুবকগণ ছোটলোকদের মত কেবল করতাল লইয়া রাস্তায় রাস্তায় দল বাঁধিয়া গান করিবেন? কে কল্পনা করিতে পারিত,

দেশের ইংরাজীশিক্ষিত সংশয়ী অবিশ্বাসী নাস্তিক ভদ্রলোকেরা আবার ঐ খোল করতালের সংকীর্ণনে মাতিয়া চোখের জল ফেলিবেন ? কেশবচন্দ্র কি দেখাইলেন ? কেশবচন্দ্র দেখাইলেন, অনেক দিন আগে গৌরাঙ্গ যে জাতিনির্বিশেষে প্রেমের বহু বহাইয়া দিয়াছিলেন, হরিনামের বীজমন্ত্র দান করিয়া গিয়াছিলেন, তাহা কেবল ইতিহাসের পাতায় বাঁচিয়া থাকিবার জন্ত নয়, তাহার প্রয়োজন ও তাহার কার্যকারিতা অতীত হয় নাই। কেশবচন্দ্র বুঝাইয়া দিলেন যে, বুদ্ধদেব বহুকাল পূর্বে গাছের তলায় বসিয়া যে উপদেশ দিয়া গিয়াছেন—সহস্র সহস্র বৎসর ধরিয়া অর্দ্ধ জগৎ নতমস্তকে যাহা স্বীকার করিয়াছে—আরও সহস্র সহস্র বৎসর ধরিয়া সমস্ত জগৎ তাহারই সাধনা করিবে, তবু তাহার প্রয়োজন কোন দিন ফুরাইবে না। তবু তাহার সত্য কোনদিন মরিবে না। মনুষ্যত্ব ধর্মকে বাদ দিয়া কোন দেশে, কোন কালে, কোন ধর্ম পালন করা যায় না। কেশবচন্দ্র দেখাইলেন, দূর-দূরান্তরে পৃথিবীর অপর প্রান্তে যে মনুষ্য জাতি বাস করে, যাহাদের আকৃতি প্রকৃতি, যাহাদের আহার বিহার, যাহাদের ভাষা ব্যবহার সকলই ভিন্ন, সকলই বিপরীত, সেখানেও ধর্মপ্রচারকগণ যে উপদেশ দেন, সে দেশেরও ধর্মগ্রন্থগুলি যাহা বলে, আমাদের হিন্দুর ধর্মকে তাহা মারে না। ধর্ম তো ধর্মকে আঘাত করে না। মত্য তো মত্যের বিরুদ্ধাচরণ করে না।

প্রত্যেক লোকের জীবনে এমন একটি ক্ষণ আসে, যখন সে অনুভব করে যে, ইহ জীবনই তাহার সর্বস্ব নয়, এই সংসার তাহার গৃহ নয়, পথ মাত্র। দুর্গম গিরি কান্তার মক্ক দুস্তর-পারাবার লঙ্ঘন করিয়া তাহাকে অগ্রসর হইতে হয়, অন্তরের প্রদীপে বিশ্বাসের অগ্নিকণা

সংযোগ করিয়া। কে পথ বলিয়া দেয়? কে ভরসা দেয়? কে হাত ধরে? তাই তো মানুষ শাস্ত্র লেখে, তাইতো মানুষ শাস্ত্র অব্বেষণ করে, তাইতো মানুষ (ধর্ম) সমাজ স্থাপন করে, তাইতো মানুষ মণ্ডলী গঠন করে। যেন একজন পড়িয়া গেলে আর একজন সাবধান করিতে পারে, যেন ডাকিলে পরস্পরের নিকট হইতে সাড়া পাওয়া যায়, যেন একজনের সংস্পর্শে আর একজন বললাভ করিতে পারে, যেন একজনের প্রভাবে আর একজন সজীবিত হইতে পারে। কিন্তু সেই প্রভাব যে কতদূর বিস্তৃত হইতে পারে, একটি হৃদয়ের আহ্বান কত সাগর বন প্রাস্তর পার হইয়া আর একটি সমবিশ্বাসী হৃদয়ের ছুয়ারে আঘাত করিতে পারে, একটি প্রাণ-স্পন্দন যে শত যোজন দূরস্থিত আর একটি প্রাণ-তন্ত্রীতে সঞ্চারিত হইতে পারে, ইহার সম্ভাবনা কে কল্পনা করিতে পারিত? ব্রহ্মানন্দ কেশবচন্দ্র ধর্মজীবনে এমন একটি কেন্দ্র পাইয়াছিলেন, যেখান হইতে সাত সমুদ্র তের নদীর পারে তাঁহার বার্তা প্রেরণ করিতেন, ডাকিলেই সাগর পার হইতেও সাড়া পাইতেন। অতীতে ভবিষ্যতে দূর-দূরান্তে মানুষ যে হৃদয়ে হৃদয়ে পরস্পরে গাঁথা হইয়া আছে, ইহাই তিনি প্রমাণ করিলেন। তিনি সূর্য্যের মত বিপুল বলে আপন পার্শ্বচরগণকে আকর্ষণ করিতে পারিতেন; তিনি সূর্য্যের মত আপনার সহজ উত্তাপে চতুর্দিক উত্তপ্ত করিয়া তুলিতে পারিতেন।

তাঁহার আধ্যাত্মিক জীবনের আর একটা দিক ছিল প্রার্থনা। কেশবচন্দ্র বলিয়াছেন, তাঁহার জীবনের প্রথম ও প্রধান কথা প্রার্থনা। প্রার্থনাই তাঁহার গুরু, প্রার্থনাই পথ প্রদর্শক, প্রার্থনাই তাঁহার বন্ধু, প্রার্থনাই সহায়, প্রার্থনাই একমাত্র সম্বল ছিল। কি আশা, কি

বিশ্বাসই তিনি পাইয়াছিলেন ! তিনি বলিতেন, আমার বিশ্বাসের হিমালয় আছে, আমার ভক্তির সরোবর আছে, আমার ভয় নাই । ধন্য তিনি, যিনি পরিপূর্ণ বিশ্বাসে, পরিপূর্ণ ভক্তিতে, পরিপূর্ণ প্রেমে, একান্ত দীনতায়, একান্ত আনুগত্যে, ইষ্টদেবতার পায়ের তলে আপনার সমস্ত জীবনটি সমর্পণ করিয়া দিতে পারেন । ধন্য তিনি, একখানি জীবনের প্রদীপ তুলিয়া জীবন-দেবতার মুখের পানে চাহিয়া চাহিয়া যিনি সংসার ভুলিয়া যাইতে পারেন । ধন্য তাঁহারা, যাহারা বিধাতাকে পিতা রূপে স্বীকার করেন, বিশ্বকর্মাকে বন্ধু বলিয়া ডাক দিতে পারেন ! তাঁহারা কি ধন পাইয়া পৃথিবীর সম্পত্তিকে অবহেলা করেন, কি ভালবাসার সংবাদ পাইয়া পৃথিবীর বন্ধুত্ব, সমাজের বন্ধুত্ব উপেক্ষা করেন, কিসের লোভে পার্থিব খ্যাতি প্রতিপত্তির প্রতি দ্রুক্ষেপের দ্বারা অবজ্ঞা প্রদর্শন করেন ; কোন্ প্রেরণায় তাঁহারা অসাধারণ কাজ করেন, অসম্ভব কথা বলেন, কাহার নির্দেশে তাঁহারা যুক্তি তর্ক উড়াইয়া দিয়া সৃষ্টি ছাড়া পথে চলেন, সাধারণ লোকের সহজ বুদ্ধিতে তাহা কিছুতেই বোধগম্য হয় না । রহস্য ভেদ করিতে না পারিয়া লোকে তাঁহাদের গালি দেয়, সমালোচনা করে, অবজ্ঞা করে, উপহাস করে । কিন্তু এ সমস্তকে উপেক্ষা করিবার মত শক্তিও তাঁহাদের থাকে । সাধারণ দশজনের মতামতের তুল্যদণ্ডে তাঁহাদের বাক্য ও কার্য্য ওজন করা চলে না । ব্যতিক্রম লইয়াই তাঁহারা সংসারে আসেন । লোকে যখন বিরুদ্ধতা করে, তাঁহারা ধৈর্য্য সহকারে অপেক্ষা করেন—যাহারা পাগল বলিয়া বিদ্রূপ করিতে থাকে, তাহাদের প্রসন্নচিত্তে আশীর্বাদ করিয়া যান ।

এই অবিচলিত নিষ্ঠা, এই অটল বিশ্বাস, এই অহৈতুকী ভক্তি,

এই অপরিসীম ধৈর্য্য, এই উচ্ছলিত প্রেম, এই অগাপ আনন্দ, এই অনন্ত বেদনা, আমরা ধারণা করিতে পারি না। আমাদের ভাঙারে এত কুলায় না, আমাদের অন্তর সংকীর্ণ, আমাদের হৃদয় অপ্রশস্ত। কিন্তু এই মূর্ত্তি কি আমরা চিনি না? এই রূপই কি তপস্বী ভারতবর্ষের, সাধক ভারতবর্ষের সনাতন রূপ নয়? চিরকাল ধরিয়া এই শক্তিই কি আমাদের আকর্ষণ করিয়া লইতেছে না? চিরকাল এই মূর্ত্তির সম্মুখেই কি আমাদের দেশ মাথা নত করে নাই? আজও কি তাহাই করিব না? আজও তো শক্তি সংগ্রহ করিতে আসিয়াছি। আমাদের কর্ম্মব্যস্ত মুখর চঞ্চল ক্ষুদ্র ক্ষুদ্র দিনগুলির মধ্যে যাহার দেখা পাই না, আমাদের প্রতিদিনকার সুখ সুবিধার হরেক রকম আয়োজন প্রয়োজনের স্তূপের মধ্যে যাহাকে ঠাঁই দিতে পারি না, আজ একটি বিশেষ তিথি, বিশেষ লগ্নে, সেই শক্তি-সন্ন্যাসীর অভ্রভেদী মহিমাকে, সেই বিরাট মনুষ্যত্বকে একটি প্রণাম নিবেদন করিয়া দিতে আসিয়াছি। একটি মুহূর্ত্তের জন্ত সব মুখরতা নিস্তব্ধ হইয়াছে, সব চঞ্চলতা স্থির হইয়াছে, সব তর্ক নীরব হইয়াছে, সব অবিশ্বাস লজ্জিত হইয়াছে, সব বিজ্ঞতা বিনীত হইয়াছে। গৃহে ফিরিবার সময় এখান হইতে আজ এক কণা ভক্তি ভিক্ষা লইয়া যাইব, যাহা আমাদের জীবনের সকল ক্ষতি, সব দুঃখ শোক সার্থক করিয়া তুলিবে;—বিশ্বাসের একটি ক্ষুণ্ণ সংগ্রহ করিয়া লইয়া যাইব, দুঃখ দুর্দ্দিনের সংগ্রামে যে রক্ষা করিবে;—এক অঞ্জলি শাস্তিবারি মাগিয়া লইব, যাহা অঙ্গনে ছিটাইয়া দিলে আমাদের সংসারের দাহ জুড়াইবে।

(১লা আষাঢ়ের তর্ককৌমুদী হইতে গৃহীত)

## ব্রহ্মানন্দ কেশবচন্দ্রের সাধনা

(বরিশাল ব্রহ্ম-মন্দিরে, ৮ই জানুয়ারী, ১৯৩৩, স্মরণার্থ সভায়,  
কুমারী মণিকুম্ভলা সেন বি, এ, কর্তৃক পঠিত)

জীবলোকের অন্তরে বাহিরে যে প্রবাহ বা গতি অবিশ্রান্ত চলিয়া যায়, তাহার প্রকৃতি অনুসন্ধান করিয়া দেখি—কেবল দ্বন্দ্ব, কেবল বিরোধ। প্রবল দুর্বল, সত্য অসত্য, সুন্দর অসুন্দরে যে অমিল অসামঞ্জস্য উপস্থিত হয়, তাহা লইয়াই এই গতি সচল ও সজীব এবং যে চিরপ্রবাহমান লহরী লীলার সৃষ্টি করে, তাহারই চলার পথে ইহার উত্থান ও পতন। দ্বন্দ্ব যেখানে, বিরোধ সেখানে—জয় পরাজয়, শাস্তি অরাজকতাও সেখানে থাকিবেই। এই ঘাতপ্রতিঘাত, বিরোধ বিদ্রোহ মানুষের অন্তরে বাহিরে সর্বত্রই বর্তমান এবং এই দ্বন্দ্ব বিরোধ লইয়া গতির ধারা যে দিকে মুখ ফিরাইবে, সে দিকের শেষ সীমানায় না পৌঁছিয়া তাহার বিরাম নাই—পরাজয় নাই। অত্যাঁয় অসত্য যখন বাড়িয়াই চলে, গতি তার তখন এমনিই অপ্রতিহত এবং শেষ সীমানায় যখন উপস্থিত হয়, তখনই জমিয়া ওঠে পুঞ্জীভূত গ্লানি। দুর্বলতা অক্ষমতার অপরাধে যত লাঞ্ছনাই আদৃষ্টে ঘটুক, চিরকাল মানুষ তাহাকে ক্ষমা করে না, সহিয়া যায় না। মানবের সৌভাগ্য অথবা বিধাতার বিধান—যত নিম্নেই সে নামিয়া আসুক, তাহার এ গতিবেগ এক স্রেরের শেষ ঘাটে আসিয়াই বিলীন হইয়া যায় না, আবার নূতন স্রেরের নূতন সঙ্গীতের সাধনা তাহার আরম্ভ হইয়া

যায়। পতন যেখানে শেষ হয়, তাহারই চিতাভস্মের উপর উত্থানের জয়যাত্রা ঘোষণা করে। কোন এক অশুভ মুহূর্তে মানবের দুর্ব্বলতার স্বেযোগ লইয়া অনেক অসত্যের ভিত্তি পত্তন হয়, মানুষ তাহা জানিতেও পারে না; কিন্তু ফুলের হার যে দিন সত্যই গলায় ফাঁসি টানিয়া দেয়, সেই দিনই মানুষ লুপ্ত চেতনাকে ফিরিয়া পায় এবং বাঁচিবার জন্ত পাগল হইয়া ওঠে। এক একটা জাতি এমনি করিয়াই এক একবার মরে এবং তাহাকে বাঁচাইতে আবার এমনিই পাগলের প্রয়োজন হয়।

এমনি একবার মরণের মুখে এই বাংলার জাতিকে প্রাণ দিতে আসিয়াছিলেন কেশবচন্দ্র। মরণের বৃকে নির্ভয়ে পা রাখিয়া কেশবচন্দ্র প্রথমেই দীক্ষা দিলেন অগ্নিমন্ত্রে এবং অগ্নির পূজারী হইয়া বাংলার পাষণবৃকে হোমানল জ্বলাইতে বসিলেন। যত কিছু মানি, যত কিছু দুর্ব্বোধ্যে আওন জ্বলাইয়া নূতন জীবনের মন্তোচ্চারণ করিলেন। অন্ধতার অন্ধকারে নিমজ্জিত এই জাতির সম্মুখে নূতন প্রাণের প্রথম প্রদীপ জালিয়া ছিলেন রামমোহন। বেদের সাধনায় তৃপ্ত না হইয়া ভারতীয় ঋষি অমুভূতির সাধনায় ডুবিয়া গিয়াছিলেন এবং উপনিষদের ব্রহ্মসত্তায় পৌঁছিয়া নির্ব্বাণ-প্রয়াসী হইলেন। উপনিষদের এই সত্যামুভূতিকে সাধনালব্ধ সত্য বলিয়া পাইয়াও ভারতীয় সমাজ বেদের আচার অনুষ্ঠানকে পরিত্যাগ করিতে পারে নাই, এবং ধীরে ধীরে আত্মানুশীলন হইতে বিচ্যুত হইয়া ইহলোকের লাভ ক্ষতিতেই ধর্ম্মকে টানিয়া আনিল। বাংলার ধর্ম্ম, ভারতের সাধনা কুসংস্কারের বোঝা বহিয়া শুধু কঙ্কালমূর্ত্তিতেই পরিণত হইল। হিন্দুধর্ম্মের এই শোচনীয় অবস্থাতে শিক্ষা, সত্যতা ও ধর্ম্মের নূতন

আলো লইয়া আসিল খ্রীষ্টান সমাজ। আত্মবিস্মৃত ভারতীয় জাতি পদ্মপালের মত সেই আলোতে বাপাইয়া পড়িল। আৰ্য্য ঋষির শিক্ষা, সভ্যতা, উপনিষদের ব্রহ্মজ্যোতি তাহাদের আর গতি রোধ করিতে পারিল না।

জাতির জীবন মৃত্যুর এই সন্ধিক্ষণে রামমোহনের প্রতিভা ও শক্তি তাহাকে রক্ষা করিল। ব্রাহ্মণের কাল্পনিক ব্যাখ্যা হইতে উপনিষদকে মুক্ত করিয়া রামমোহন তাহার স্বরূপ প্রকাশ করিলেন। ভারতবাসী বুঝিল, তাহাদের ঋষির উপলব্ধ তত্ত্বদর্শনকে অতিক্রম করিয়া খ্রীষ্টান সমাজ নূতন কিছু প্রকাশ করে নাই। রামমোহনের চেষ্টায় জাতি আবার আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠা হইল—তাহার গতির মুখ ফিরিয়া গেল; কিন্তু যে প্রাণধারা লইয়া রামমোহন আসিয়াছিলেন, তাহার উজ্জ্বলতর বিকাশ দেখিতে পাই মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ, বিজয়কৃষ্ণ গোস্বামী ও ব্রহ্মানন্দ কেশবচন্দ্রের মধ্যে। জাতিকে আত্মপ্রতিষ্ঠা এবং আত্মবিশ্বাসী করিলেন রামমোহন, কিন্তু আধ্যাত্মিকতার চরম পরিণতিতে লইয়া চলিলেন এই ঋষিগণ্ডলী। সমস্ত কুসংস্কার হইতে জীবাত্মাকে মুক্ত স্বাধীন পুরুষ বলিয়া পরিচয় দিলেন কেশবচন্দ্র। মানবাত্মার স্বাধীন সভ্য, স্বাধীন বিকাশ এবং বিশ্বাত্মার সহিত মিলনেই তাহার পরম গতি—আপন জীবনে কেশবচন্দ্র এই সত্য অনুভব করিলেন এবং অকুণ্ঠিতচিত্তে সকলের সম্মুখে তাহার সাক্ষ্য দিলেন। বিরাট মানবাত্মার অধীনতার অবমাননা তিনি কোন দিন সহিতে পারিলেন না। যে অগ্নিমন্ত্র জীবনপ্রভাতে তাঁহার গতি নির্দেশ করিয়া দিল, যে আশুপ অহরহ বুকের ভিতর জলিয়া তাঁহাকে উদ্ভাসিত করিয়া তুলিল, সেই অগ্নিকুণ্ডে একে একে তাঁর মুক্ত আত্মার সকল বন্ধন, সকল



শৃঙ্খল আছতি হইয়া গেল। দেহের বন্ধন, মনের কুসংস্কার, আত্মার জড়তা সব সে অগ্নিসাধনার উগ্রতায় দগ্ধ হইয়া গেল। সেই মুক্ত সুন্দর স্নানির্মল আত্মায় পরমাত্মার প্রকাশ অতি সহজ ও স্বাভাবিক হইয়া কেশবচন্দ্রের সসীম অস্তিত্বকে অসীম সত্তায় উপনীত করিল। সকল সংস্কার, সকল বন্ধন, সকল অসত্যকে মনের ছুয়ার হইতে রুদ্ধ করিয়া, সেই মুক্ত মনের নির্জ্ঞানপুরে বসিয়া পরমসুন্দরের, চরম সত্যের আবির্ভাব লাভ করাই ছিল কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবন এবং এই সত্যের ও সুন্দরের প্রতিষ্ঠাই ছিল তাঁহার সাধনা। মানব-সমাজের আবিষ্কৃত ও প্রতিষ্ঠিত সকল সত্যকে তিনি সাগ্রহে স্বীকার করিলেন, সকল সত্যাদর্শী পুরুষকে হৃদয়ের অতি বড় শ্রদ্ধার অঞ্জলি দান করিলেন; কিন্তু কাহারও চরণতলে আত্মসমর্পণ করিতে পারিলেন না। খ্রীষ্ট তাঁহাকে প্রেমোন্মাদ করিলেন, বুদ্ধ তাঁহাকে তপস্তায় ডুবাইলেন, চৈতন্য তাঁহাকে হরিনামে নৃত্য করাইলেন; কিন্তু নিঃসংশয়ে কাহারও পায়ে আপনাকে অঞ্জলি দিতে তিনি পারিলেন না। সত্যের সন্ধানে সকল প্রাণ, সকল সমস্তা তিনি ভগবানের চরণেই নিবেদন করিতেন এবং সেখানেই তাঁহার সকল সমস্তার মীমাংসা হইত।

কেশবচন্দ্রের এই স্বাধীন আত্মানুশীলন এবং স্পষ্ট আত্মদর্শনের সাধনা আরম্ভ হইল পরমাত্মার সহিত যোগে এবং তাঁহার পরি-সমাণ্ডিত করিলেন অপূর্ণ মিলনানন্দে। মানুষ যাহাকে সাধনার সিদ্ধি ও পরাকাষ্ঠা বলিয়া জানে, ভগবানের সহিত সেই একাত্মবোধ ও যুক্তাবস্থাই হইল কেশবের সাধনার গোড়ার কথা। তাঁহার স্বাধীন আত্মা যে কাহারও পায়ে মাথা নত করে নাই, সে আশ্রয় ও নির্ভরের সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ স্থান লাভ করিয়াছিল বলিয়াই। কোন সত্যকে যে পূর্ণ

বলিয়া নিঃসন্দেহে গ্রহণ করিতে পারেন নাই, সে তাঁহার পরম সত্যের সহিত সাক্ষাৎকারলাভ হইয়াছিল বলিয়াই। পরমাত্মার সহিত তাঁহার এই যোগকে সম্ভব করিয়া দিল তাঁহার অকপট বিশ্বাস এবং তাঁহাকে পাইবার জন্ত তীব্র ব্যাকুলতা। যে ব্যক্তি এক মুহূর্তের জন্তও কাহারও অধীনতাকে স্বীকার করিতে পারেন নাই, প্রতি মুহূর্তে তাঁহার ভগবানের চরণে কত প্রার্থনা, কত কাতরতা, কত ভিক্ষা ! কেশবচন্দ্র ভগবান্কে সাধনার পথে সঙ্গীরূপে, সহায়রূপে সর্বদা সম্মুখে, পশ্চাতে, পার্শ্বে রাখিয়া চলিয়াছেন। যখন সংশয় আসিয়া পথ রুদ্ধ করিয়া দাঁড়ায়, দৈন্ত আসিয়া জীবনের আশা আনন্দকে নিশ্চূর্ণ করে, প্রপঞ্চ আসিয়া জীবনকে জটিল করিয়া তোলে, তখন প্রার্থনাই তাঁহার পথে আলো জালিয়া দেয়। বাল্যকালে কোন্ দিন কে তাঁহার বুকের ভিতর বলিয়া গেল, “প্রার্থনা কর”—সেই দিন হইতে শেষ পর্য্যন্ত এই প্রার্থনাই তাঁহার সকল অভাব পূর্ণ করিয়াছে। কেশবচন্দ্র চাহিতে জানিতেন, তাই তিনি চাহিয়া একবারও বিমুখ হইয়া ফিরিয়া আসেন নাই। এই প্রার্থনা ও বিশ্বাসের ভিতর দিয়াই তিনি ভগবান্কে হৃদয়ে খুঁজিয়া পাইলেন। হৃদয়ে দেবতার আসন প্রতিষ্ঠা করিয়া সেখানে শুধু তিনি এই দেবতারই অধীন হইয়া রহিলেন। স্বথ, শাস্তি, ভোগ, আরাম, মোহ, ভয় কোন কিছুই যাহাকে এতটুকু আটকাইতে পারে নাই, তাঁহার এ অধীনতা কেন ? মুহূর্ত আপনার অক্ষমতা জানাইয়া ভিক্ষা চাহিতে তো সঙ্কোচ হইল না। স্বাধীনতা আমরা জানি না, বুঝি না ; তাই স্বাধীন হইতে গিয়া বাহিরে সাজি উচ্ছৃঙ্খল, ভিতরে ফণা তুলিয়া দাঁড়ায় অহংকার। তাই বিশ্বাসে আমরা শিথিল, প্রার্থনায়

আমাদের সঙ্কোচ। সত্যকে যারা চিনিয়াছে, তাহারা অসত্যকে ভাঙ্গিতে পারে, কারণ গড়িতেও তারা জানে। কিন্তু ধ্বংসই যাহার প্রকৃতি, সে যে সত্যকেও গলা টিপিয়া মারিয়া ফেলে। কেশবচন্দ্র সত্য পাইয়াছিলেন, তাই সত্যের সঙ্গে তাঁর এত সখ্য, সত্যের কাছে তাঁর এই মিনতি। এই সত্যকে রক্ষা করিতে সুপ্রতিষ্ঠিত করিতে আত্মপরীক্ষায় হৃদয়কে ছিন্নভিন্ন করিয়া ফেলিতেন—পাপের গন্ধও সেখানে সত্যকে মলিন না করে। তীব্র বিচারে হৃদয়কে দগ্ধ করিয়া পাকা সোণা করিয়া তুলিতেন, সে সোণায় সত্যের যে ছাপ লাগিয়া যাইত, তাহা নিখুঁত, তাহা অবিকৃত, তাহা সুন্দর।

কেশবচন্দ্রের এই যোগের সাধনা তাঁহার নিকট মধুর হইয়া ফুটিয়া উঠিল ভক্তি ও প্রেমের রস লইয়া। বিচারে যোগ সিদ্ধি দিয়াছে, কিন্তু তৃপ্তি আনিল না। বিচারের সাধনার তীব্রতায়, উত্তেজনায় দেহের সর্বত্র বিন্দু বিন্দু রক্ত বহিয়া যাইত, চোখ ফাটিয়া রক্তের ফোঁটা পড়িয়া যাইত; কিন্তু এও তাঁহাকে আনন্দ দিল না, তৃপ্তি দিল না, যতদিনে না রক্তের পরিবর্তে আবেগে, উচ্ছ্বাসে অশ্রুবত্তা তাঁহার বক্ষ ভাগাইয়া দিয়াছে। এই অপূর্ণ মিলনানন্দে বিতোর হইয়া যেদিন উন্নত নৃত্য করিতে পারিলেন, সেই দিনই চিত্ত শান্ত হইল, প্রাণ তৃপ্তি লাভ করিল। ভগবানের বিশাল বিশ্বমূর্ত্তি, আবার মধুর প্রেমঘন মূর্ত্তি, ভক্ত ছুইই চায়, নতুবা তার তৃপ্তি কোথায়?

নিজের বুকের ভিতরে যে নূতন আলো, নূতন সত্য কেশবচন্দ্র খুঁজিয়া পাইলেন, মানবের নিকট সে অমূল্য রত্ন স্থাপন করিতে তিনি ব্যাকুল হইয়া উঠিলেন। যিনি মানবাত্মার স্বাধীন সত্তায় বিশ্বাসবান, স্বাধীন অমুশীলনের একান্ত অনুরাগী, তিনি মানবের নিকট ঘোষণাও

করিলেন তাহাই। যিনি অপরের নিকট আপনাকে সমর্পণ করিতে কোন দিন পারেন নাই, তিনি অপরকেও আপনার নিকট সমর্পিত করিয়া লইতে স্বীকার করিলেন না। যে যোগ তাঁহাকে পথ দেখাইয়াছে, তাহা অসাধারণ, আয়াসলব্ধ বস্তু নয়, এই ছিল তাঁর বিশ্বাস। স্মরণ্য এই যোগই সকলের পথের কথা কহিয়া দিবে নিজের জীবনের সাক্ষ্যদ্বারা, শুধু এই কথাটাই তিনি সকলকে জানাইলেন। তাই তিনি গুরু হইতে চাহিলেন না, বন্ধুরূপে পরস্পরে স্নেহ ভালবাসার বিনিময়েই সকলকে আপন করিয়া লইলেন। আচার্য্য হইয়া উপদেশ দেওয়া তাঁহার সহ্য হইল না, সেবক হইয়া নিবেদন জানানোই ছিল তাঁর প্রকৃতি। প্রভু হইয়া সেবা ও সম্মান গ্রহণ করিতে তিনি পারিলেন না। বন্ধুদের পায়ের জুতার উপরে মাথা রাখিয়া ভুক্তাবশিষ্ট কুড়াইয়া খাইয়াই তাঁহার তৃপ্তি হইল। অতবড় স্বাধীনচেতা বীর প্রেমে বিনয়ে, এ বৈষ্ণবধর্ম্ম কোথায় শিথিলেন, ভাবিয়া অবাক হই। তিনি শুধু আত্মমর্য্যাদাকে ভালবাসিলেন না, অপরের মর্য্যাদাকেও সমান চোখেই দেখিলেন। যে প্রেমের উদ্ভাদনা তাঁহাকে হরিসঙ্কীর্ণনে টানিয়া নিল, সেই প্রেমধারার স্পর্শ পাইয়া তাঁহার সঞ্জিগণ তৃপ্তিতে পূর্ণ হইয়া যাইতেন। দ্বিধা সঙ্কোচ বলিয়া কোন জিনিষ কেশবচন্দ্রের নিকটে তাঁহার বন্ধুবান্ধবগণ জানিতেন না, এমন কি প্রভু ভৃত্যের সম্পর্কটিও ছিল এইরূপ। শাসন করিয়া মানুষকে তিনি সংশোধন করিতে তেমন সুবিধা পাইতেন না, কাঁদিয়া বুকে জড়াইয়া সংশোধন করাই তাঁহার পক্ষে সহজ হইত বেশী। বন্ধুবান্ধবকে পরিবারের বাহিরে বাহিরে রাখিয়া তিনি ভালবাসিতে পারিলেন না, তাই ‘ভারত আশ্রম’ গড়িয়া সকলকে লইয়া এক বিরাট

পরিবার সৃষ্টি করিলেন। পিতার বিশ্বপ্রেমে সম্মানগণও বুঝিতে পারে নাই, কোন ব্যক্তি তাহাদের অনাস্থীয়, কে তাহাদের পর। নিজে কে এমন করিয়া সকলের সঙ্গে সমান করিয়া রাখিতেন। বন্ধু, দরদী ছাড়া কাহারও প্রভু হইতে পারিতেন না বলিয়াই, লোক তাঁহার নিকট আপনিই আত্মসমর্পণ করিয়া যাইত।

আত্মহারা প্রেমিক কেশবচন্দ্র নিজে কে এমন করিয়া বিলুপ্ত করিলেন, কিন্তু এ প্রেমবারি তাঁহার অগ্নিমন্ত্র, তাঁহার স্বাধীনতাকে কখনও নিস্তেজ, দুর্বল করিতে পারে নাই। যে নীতি, যে পথ বিবেকরূপে ভগবদ্বাণী তাঁহার অন্তরে থাকিয়া নির্দেশ করিয়া দিয়াছে, সে নীতি, সে পথকে শিথিল করিতে পারে, টলাইতে পারে, এমন কোন শক্তি বা প্রভাব তাঁহাকে জয় করিতে পারে নাই। যাহা সত্য জানিয়াছেন, তাহা প্রতিষ্ঠা করিতে তাঁহার বিন্দুমাত্র ভয় ছিল না। তাঁহার প্রেম, তাঁহার বিনয় কোন দিন তাঁহাকে দুর্বল করে নাই। বীরত্ব ও বিনয়ের এই অপূর্ণ সংমিশ্রণই ছিল কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবনের বড় কথা।

এই বীরত্ব, এই আত্মসম্মানবোধ তাঁহার নিকট ধরাইয়া দিল তাঁহার জাতির দুর্বলতা। জাতির জড়তা, দুর্বলতা এবং আত্মবিস্মৃতি দেখিয়াই তিনি আশুনের সাধনা লইয়া দাঁড়াইলেন। আত্মমর্যাদা-বোধে, জাতীয়তাবোধে, তাহাদের প্রবুদ্ধ করিতেই ছিল তাঁহার অক্লান্ত চেষ্টা এবং বিভিন্ন প্রতিষ্ঠানগঠনেই ছিল সে অফুরন্ত কর্মপ্রেরণার অভিব্যক্তি। আপনার অর্থ, আপনার সামর্থ্য সব কিছু এই কর্মক্ষেত্রে নিঃশেষে দান করিয়া আপনি ফকির হইয়া দাঁড়াইলেন। শক্তিমান সমাজই শক্তিমান জাতি সংগঠন করে। তাই সমাজগঠনেই ছিল

তাঁর আগ্রহ। শিক্ষাহীনতা এবং কুশিক্ষা, ধর্মহীনতা এবং কুসংস্কার পাষণ্ডের মত বাংলার বুকে চাপিয়া বসিয়াছিল, কাজেই নরনারীকে সুশিক্ষা ও সুধর্ম দান করাই ছিল তাঁহার জীবনের ব্রত। এই ব্রত উদ্‌যাপনে আপনার সকল শক্তি সম্পূর্ণ ব্যয় করিয়া তবে তিনি তৃপ্ত হইলেন, নিশ্চিন্ত হইলেন।

জাতির অধঃপতন যখন ঘটে, মৃত্যু যখন ঘনাইয়া আসে, তখনই হয় এই সব ব্রতধারী জীবনের আবির্ভাব। যে শক্তি, যে প্রেরণা, যে নব চেতনা তাঁহারা জাতিকে দান করিয়া যান, তাহাই হয় আবার জাতির বহুদিন ধরিয়া বাঁচিবার উপাদান। বাংলার সমাজে কেশবচন্দ্রের দান এমনই বহুকালের সম্পত্তি। বিজ্ঞায় ও পাণ্ডিত্যে কেশবচন্দ্র বাংলার শ্রেষ্ঠ পুরুষ নহেন, কিন্তু প্রাণের প্রাচুর্য্যো, সাধনার তীব্রতায়, শক্তির প্রভায় কেশবচন্দ্র বাংলায় যে জাগরণের চেতনা আনিয়া দিলেন, যে বিকাশের প্রেরণা আনিয়া দিলেন, তাহা লইয়া বাংলা সত্যই বাঁচিয়া উঠিয়াছে এবং সত্যই বহুদিন বাঁচিবে। ধ্যানী কেশবচন্দ্র, বিবেকবানু কেশবচন্দ্র, বিরাগী কেশবচন্দ্র মানবতার যে আদর্শ রাখিয়া গেলেন, মানবাত্মার ক্ষুদ্রত্বকে যে অসীমত্বে পৌছাইয়া দিলেন, তাহার পরিচয়, তাহার আশ্বাদ বাংলায় নূতন, সন্দেহ নাই। মানবাত্মার স্বাধীনতার এমন সুসংবাদ বহুদিন এ জাতি পায় নাই, তাই কেশবচন্দ্রের দান বাংলায় অপরিমেয়। ব্রহ্মের সহিত মিলন-লাভের এমন সহজ স্বাভাবিক প্রণালী ও কৌশল কেশবচন্দ্রই প্রথম আপন জীবন দিয়া দেখাইলেন। তিনি বিশ্বাস করিতেন, সকল মানুষই অনায়াসে ব্রহ্মানন্দ লাভ করিতে পারে, কিন্তু তিনি জানিতে পারেন নাই, কত সঞ্চিত মালিষ্ঠ সাধারণ মানবহৃদয়ে ব্রহ্মবিকাশের

পথ রোধ করিয়া দেয়, কত ক্লেশ যে মলিনতায় তাহারা পায়; কিন্তু তাহাকে দূর করিবার ক্ষমতা ভাগ্যবানেরই থাকে। কেশবচন্দ্র যাহা বিশ্বাস করিতেন, আজ তাহাই আশীর্বাদ বলিয়া তাঁহার প্রেমিক প্রাণের নিকট প্রার্থনা করি।

(১৩৩৯ সালের মাঘের 'ব্রহ্মবাদী' হইতে উদ্ধৃত)

## ব্রহ্মানন্দ কেশবচন্দ্র সেন

(ঢাকা পূর্ববাংলা—ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে কেশবচন্দ্রের স্মৃতিসভায় শ্রীযুক্ত  
চাক্রচন্দ্র বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় কর্তৃক পঠিত)

শ্রীমদ্ভাগবত ব'লেছেন, “অবতারা হসংখ্যোয়াস্তস্ত সত্বনিধের্মুনে।”  
যিনি নিখিল প্রাণের আশ্রয়, তাঁর অবতার অসংখ্য। যখনই মানব-  
সমাজে ধর্মের গ্লানি উপস্থিত হয়, তখনই এক এক জন মহাপ্রাণ  
মানবের আবির্ভাব হয় এবং তাঁর দ্বারা সমাজের গ্লানি দূরীভূত হয়।

ভারতের যখন দারুণ দুর্দিন, তখন মহামনীষী রাজা রামমোহন  
রায় আবির্ভূত হ'য়ে ভারতের মুমূর্ষু শরীরে নবজীবনসঞ্চারের সূচনা  
করেন। মহাত্মা রাজা রামমোহনের সাধনার উত্তরাধিকার হন মহর্ষি  
দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর।

এই সময়ে একদিকে হিন্দু-সমাজ বহুদুগসঞ্চিত কুসংস্কারে ও  
বুদ্ধিবিচারের অভাবে জড়স্ত ও বর্করত্ন আশ্রয় করে বিনাশের পথে  
চলছিল। . আর অপর দিকে যুবকসম্প্রদায় নূতন ইউরোপীয় জ্ঞান-  
বিজ্ঞানের আশ্বাদ পেয়ে ও বিদেশী বিজেতাদের ভিন্নপ্রকৃতির সভ্যতার  
মোহে স্বদেশের সংস্কৃতির ধারা হারিয়ে বিপথে বিভ্রান্ত হচ্ছিল।  
স্বাধীন চিন্তার যে নেশা তখনকার নব্যবঙ্গকে পেয়ে বসেছিল, তার  
ফলে দেশের সমস্ত প্রতিষ্ঠান অলুষ্ঠান লণ্ডভণ্ড হ'য়ে যেতে বসেছিল।  
এ কথা ঠিক যে, না ভাঙলে গড়া যায় না। এই ভাঙনেরও দরকার  
হয়েছিল, এর মধ্যেও ভগবানের গুভসঙ্কেত দেখতে পাওয়া যায়।



এই ভাঙন রোধ করে গঠনের কার্যে অবতীর্ণ হন মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ। তিনি ভারতের শ্রেষ্ঠ আদর্শের ভিত্তির উপরে সর্ব দেশের ও সর্বকালের শ্রেষ্ঠ আদর্শ ও সত্যকে স্থাপিত করলেন।

এই শুভকার্যে তাঁর সহায় হলেন কেশবচন্দ্র। সৌম্যমূর্তি কেশবচন্দ্র মহর্ষির সহিত মিলিত হবার আগেই, মাত্র ১৮ বৎসর বয়সেই আত্ম প্রণোদিত হ'য়ে দেশহিতে মনোনিবেশ করেন। ইং ১৮৫৬ সালে তিনি আমেরিকান ইউনিটেরিয়ান মিশনারী রেভারেণ্ড ড্যাল ও সুবিখ্যাত পাদরী লং সাহেবের সহিত সন্মিলিত হ'য়ে “ব্রিটিশ ইণ্ডিয়া সোসাইটি” নামে এক সভা স্থাপন করেন এবং সেই সভার সংশ্লেষে কলুটোলায় তাঁর নিজের বাড়িতে একটি ‘নৈশ বিদ্যালয়’ স্থাপন করেন, তাতে তিনি তাঁর বন্ধুদের নিয়ে শিক্ষা দিতেন। পর বৎসর তিনি আপনার বাড়িতে ‘গুড উইল ফ্রেটার্নিটি’ নামে এক সভা স্থাপন করেন, তাতে তিনি প্রসিদ্ধ পাশ্চাত্য ধর্ম্যাচার্যদের গ্রন্থ থেকে অংশ নির্বাচন করে পাঠ করতেন, লিখিত প্রবন্ধ পড়তেন, অথবা মৌখিক বক্তৃতা দিতেন। এই সভাতে তাঁর ভাবী বাগ্মিতার সূত্রপাত হয়। কেশবচন্দ্রের সমাধ্যায়ী বন্ধু ছিলেন মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের মধ্যম পুত্র সত্যেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর। সত্যেন্দ্রনাথের অনুরোধে এক সভার অধিবেশনে মহর্ষি সভাপতিত্ব করেন এবং সেই সূত্রে যুবক কেশবের ধর্ম্মানুরাগ ও বাগ্মিতার প্রমাণ পান।

১৮৫৮ সালে কেশবচন্দ্র ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের প্রতিষ্ঠাপত্রে স্বাক্ষর করে ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ ভুক্ত হয়।

এর পরে ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ নব নব কার্যক্ষেত্রে প্রবেশ করতে লাগল। কেশবচন্দ্র ঐ সকল কার্যের উদ্ভাবনকর্তা, আর দেবেন্দ্রনাথ তার

পৃষ্ঠপোষক হ’তে লাগলেন। ১৮৫৯ সালে ‘ব্রাহ্ম-বিদ্যালয়’ স্থাপিত হ’ল এবং তাতে কেশব ও দেবেঞ্জনাথ উপদেশ দিতে লাগলেন, এবং সেই উপদেশামৃত শোনবার জন্ত তখনকার বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের বহু সম্মানিত ছাত্র সেই বিদ্যালয়ে আকৃষ্ট হ’তে লাগলেন।

১৮৬০ সালে “সঙ্গতসভা” নামে ধর্ম্মালোচনার এক সভা স্থাপিত হয়। এই সঙ্গতসভাই ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের আধ্যাত্মিক শক্তির উৎসস্বরূপ হয়েছিল। এখানে যুবকদল অসঙ্কোচে সর্ববিধ প্রশ্ন আলোচনা করতেন, এবং যা সত্য ও পালনীয় ব’লে মনে হ’ত, তা কার্য্যে পরিণত করবার জন্ত দৃঢ়প্রতিজ্ঞ হতেন।

“ইণ্ডিয়ান মিরর” পাক্ষিক পত্র প্রকাশ, কলিকাতা-কলেজ স্থাপন, ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্ম প্রচার ও নব্য যুবকদের উদ্বোধিত করার কৰ্ম্মে কেশবচন্দ্র আত্মনিয়োগ করলেন; এই সময়ে তাঁর প্রসিদ্ধ পুস্তিকা “ইয়ং বেঙ্গল দিস্ ইজ্ ফর্ ইউ” প্রকাশিত হ’ল। কেশব নব্যবঙ্গের অবিসম্বাদিত নেতা হ’য়ে দাঁড়ালেন।

১৮৬২ সালের ১লা বৈশাখ দিবাসে কেশবচন্দ্র দেবেঞ্জনাথ ঠাকুর মহাশয়ের দ্বারা কলিকতা-সমাজের আচার্য্যের পদে বৃত্ত হন এবং “ব্রাহ্মানন্দ” উপাধি প্রাপ্ত হন এবং কেশবচন্দ্রও দেবেঞ্জনাথ ঠাকুর মহাশয়কে “মহর্ষি” নামে পরিচিত করেন। ঐ দিন তিনি স্ত্রীয় পত্নীকে ঠাকুরবাড়িতে নিয়ে গিয়েছিলেন। এজন্ত কেশবচন্দ্রকে কিছুদিনের জন্ত বাড়ি থেকে বিতাড়িত হ’তে হয়। কেশবচন্দ্র পুনরায় স্বগৃহে স্বপরিবারের মধ্যে প্রতিষ্ঠিত হ’য়ে তাঁর প্রথম পুত্রের নামকরণের অনুষ্ঠান নবপ্রণীত ব্রাহ্মপদ্ধতি অনুসারে সম্পন্ন করেন।

কেশবচন্দ্র “ব্রাহ্মবন্ধু সভা” নামে এক সভা স্থাপন করেন, তার প্রধান উদ্দেশ্য ছিল অন্তঃপুরে স্ত্রীশিক্ষা বিস্তার।

কেশবচন্দ্র দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুর মহাশয়কে একটি প্রধান সংস্কার কার্যে প্রবৃত্ত করেছিলেন—এতদিন পর্যন্ত উপবীতধারী উপাচার্য্যগণ ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের বেদীতে আসীন হ’য়ে উপাসনার কার্য্য নিষ্পন্ন করতেন। কেশবচন্দ্রের প্ররোচনায় মহর্ষি দুই জন উপবীতত্যাগী উপাচার্য্যকে ঐ কর্ম্মে নিযুক্ত করেন।

কেশবচন্দ্রের প্ররোচনাতে এই সময়ে দুইটি অসবর্ণ বিবাহ অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ কেশবের প্ররোচনায় নিজে উপবীত ত্যাগ করলেও সমাজে অসবর্ণ বিবাহ প্রচলন সমর্থন করতে পারুলেন না। ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে বিষম আন্দোলন উপস্থিত হ’ল “তত্ত্ববোধিনী” পত্রিকা কেশব-বিরোধী দলের হস্তগত হওয়াতে কেশবচন্দ্র “ধর্ম্মতত্ত্ব” নামক অপর এক পত্র প্রকাশ করতে আরম্ভ করলেন এবং ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্মের উদ্দেশ্য প্রচার ও সমর্থন করতে লাগলেন।

কিন্তু কেশবচন্দ্রকে কলিকাতা-সমাজের সম্পাদকের পদ পরিত্যাগ করতে হ’ল। ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্মকে হিন্দুভাবে হিন্দু-সমাজের মধ্যে প্রচার করা মহর্ষির চিরদিনের আদর্শ ছিল। সেই আদর্শের ব্যাঘাতের আশঙ্কাতেই তিনি কেশবচন্দ্রের হাত থেকে সমাজের কর্তৃত্ব প্রত্যাহার করলেন, কিন্তু কেশবের প্রতি তাঁর স্নেহের হ্রাস হ’ল না।

১৮৬৫ সালে কেশবচন্দ্র, বিজয়কৃষ্ণ গোস্বামী ও অঘোরনাথ গুপ্ত মহাশয়েরা পূর্ববঙ্গে প্রচার করতে আসেন। এই সময়ে বহু যুবক ব্রাহ্মধর্ম্ম গ্রহণ করেন, এবং পূর্ববঙ্গ ব্যোপে হলুহুল প’ড়ে যায়।

এই সময়ে কেশব মহিলাদের আধ্যাত্মিক উন্নতির জন্ত 'ব্রাহ্মিকা সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠা' করেন। পণ্ডিত শিবনাথ শাস্ত্রী মহাশয় বলেছেন যে, “কেবল নারীকুলের উন্নতির জন্ত ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ যাহা করিয়াছেন, কেবল সেই কারণে ইহার মস্তকে দেশহিতৈষী ব্যক্তিগণের আশীর্বাদ-পুষ্প বৃষ্টি হওয়া উচিত।”

১৮৬৬ সালে কেশবচন্দ্রের অনুরোধে মহর্ষি নাথোৎসবের সময়ে সমাজের পার্শ্বে পর্দার আড়ালে মহিলাদের বসবার বন্দোবস্ত করেন। ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের তথা বাংলার ইতিহাসে এই প্রথম মহিলাগণ পুরুষদের সঙ্গে এক সভায় আসন গ্রহণ করলেন। মহিলাদের মধ্যে উৎসাহের সঞ্চার হ'ল। এর পরে কেশবচন্দ্র মহিলাদের নিয়ে ডাক্তার রবসন নামক এক খ্রীষ্টীয় পাদরীর বাড়িতে সাক্ষ্য সমিতিতে যোগ দিতে যান। সহরের বড় ঘরের মেয়েদের প্রকাশ্য স্থানে যাওয়া এই প্রথম। এই ব্যাপার নিয়ে সংবাদপত্রে মহা আন্দোলন হয়, এবং দেশের লোকে ব্রাহ্মদের সর্ব্বনেশে দল বলতে আরম্ভ করে। তখন বাংলা দেশে একটা প্রবাদ প্রচলিত হ'ল যে, জাত মারলে তিন সেনে—হোটেলওয়ালা উইলসেন, ইষ্টিসেন আর কেশব সেন।

কেশবচন্দ্র অসাধারণ উদারতার বশে নানা দেশের ও নানা কালের ধর্ম্মপ্রচারক সাধু মহাত্মাদের প্রতি শ্রদ্ধা ও সম্মান প্রকাশ-ভাবে প্রচার করতে আরম্ভ করেন; যিশুখ্রীষ্টের প্রতি ও মহম্মদের প্রতি যেমন তাঁর ভক্তি প্রকাশ পেল, চৈতন্যদেব, নানক প্রভৃতির প্রতিও তেমনি ভক্তি প্রকাশ পেতে লাগল। কিন্তু দেশের লোকে কেশবের খ্রীষ্টভক্তি দেখে তাঁকে খ্রীষ্টান মনে ক'রে মহা আন্দোলন উপস্থিত করলেন, এবং তার সঙ্গে কলিকাতা-সমাজের সভ্যরাও

যোগ দিলেন। কাজেই কেশবের সঙ্গে কলিকাতা-সমাজের বিচ্ছেদ অপরিহার্য হ'য়ে উঠল।

১৮৬৬ সালে কেশবচন্দ্র পৃথক ভাবে ভারতবর্ষীয়-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠা করলেন এবং মহর্ষি কলিকাতা-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের নাম পরিবর্তন ক'রে নাম দিলেন আদি-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ।

কেশবচন্দ্র দৈনিক উপাসনা প্রবর্তন করলেন। নবভক্তির আবেগে তাঁরা চৈতন্যদেবের ভক্তিতত্ত্ব আলোচনা করতে লাগলেন, এবং পথে পথে খোল করতাল সহযোগে সংকীৰ্ত্তন ক'রে বেড়াতে লাগলেন। সেই কীৰ্ত্তনে প্রচারিত হ'তে লাগল—

“নর-নারী সাধারণের সমান অধিকার,

যার আছে ভক্তি, পাবে মুক্তি, নাহি জাত-বিচার।”

এই কথা এখনও উন্নতিশীল ব্রাহ্মদেব মূলমন্ত্র হ'য়ে রয়েছে।

১৮৭০ সালে কেশবচন্দ্র বিলাতে যান। সেখানে মহারানী ভিক্টোরিয়া থেকে সাধারণ লোক সকলে, এমন কি খ্রীষ্টান পাদরীরা পর্য্যন্ত, তাঁর প্রতি সম্মান প্রদর্শনে ক্রটি করেন নি।

স্বদেশে প্রত্যাবর্তন করেই তিনি দেশের সৰ্ব্ববিধ সংস্কারকার্যে মনোনিবেশ করেন। ‘ভারতসংস্কারসভা’ প্রতিষ্ঠা করে তার সংস্বে জুলভ সাহিত্য-প্রচারের, নৈশ বিদ্যালয় পরিচালনার, স্ত্রীশিক্ষা ও সার্বজনীন শিক্ষার প্রচারের এবং সুরাপান নিবারণের চেষ্টায় তিনি আত্মনিয়োগ করেন।

১৮৭২ সালে তিনিই চেষ্টা ক'রে ব্রাহ্মদের বিবাহ সম্বন্ধীয় বিধি প্রবর্তন করান। এই সময়েই মহিলারা পর্দার বাহিরে আসন গ্রহণ ক'রে উপাসনায় যোগ দিতে লাগলেন এবং দেশ থেকে পর্দা উঠে

যাওয়ার শুভসূচনা হ'ল। তিনি উদ্বোধনী হ'য়ে বিধবা-বিবাহ-নাটক অভিনয় করান এবং নিজে একজন অভিনেতা হয়েছিলেন।

১৮৭৮ সালে কেশবচন্দ্র কোচবিহারের নাবালক মহারাজার সহিত তাঁর বালিকা কন্যার বিবাহ দিতে সম্মতি প্রকাশ করেন। অনেকে এই বিবাহের প্রতিবাদ করেন। কেউ কেউ বলেন যে, কেশবচন্দ্র ঈশ্বরের প্রত্যাশা অস্তরে লুপ্ত ক'রে এতে সম্মতি দিয়েছিলেন। শ্রীযুক্ত বিজয়চন্দ্র মজুমদার লিখেছেন যে, একদিন কেশব দেখেন যে, মহারাজা ও স্ত্রীশ্রী দেবী পরস্পরের হাত ধরে ব'সে আছেন, এবং এতে তাঁদের পরস্পরের অনুরাগের পরিচয় পেয়ে পাতিব্রত্যের পবিত্র আদর্শ অক্ষুণ্ণ রাখবার জগুই তিনি এই বিবাহে সম্মতি দিতে বাধ্য হয়েছিলেন।

কিন্তু এর ফলে আবার ব্রাহ্মদের মধ্যে দুই দল হ'ল। কেশবচন্দ্রকে সমাজের আচার্য্যের পদ থেকে অপসৃত করবার চেষ্টা যখন বিফল হ'ল, তখন কেশবচন্দ্রের কার্য্যের প্রতিবাদস্বরূপ অনেক ব্রাহ্ম স্বতন্ত্র সমাজ স্থাপন করলেন, এবং সেই সমাজই এখন সাধারণ-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ নামে অভিহিত হচ্ছে।

কেশবচন্দ্র 'ভারতবর্ষীয়-ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের' নাম পরিবর্তন করে 'নব-বিধান সমাজ' রাখলেন এবং ভগ্ন সমাজ পুনর্গঠন করতে চেষ্টা করতে লাগলেন।

এই গুরু পরিশ্রমে ও চিন্তার উদ্বেগে তাঁর স্বাস্থ্য ভগ্ন হয়, এবং ১৮৮৪ সালে তাঁর প্রাণবিয়োগ ঘটে।

কেশবচন্দ্র লোকোত্তর মহামানুষ ছিলেন। কেশবচন্দ্র পরম ভক্ত সাধু মহাত্মা ছিলেন। তাঁর ঈশ্বরোপলব্ধি সত্য জীবন্ত, তাঁর বাণীর

মধ্যে বেন অগ্নিজ্বালা নির্গত হয়। তাঁর নিকটে ঈশ্বরবিশ্বাস কিরূপ সত্য ও জীবন্ত ছিল, তা তাঁর দু-একটি বাণী অনুধাবন করলেই বুঝতে পারা যায় কেশব ছিলেন ব্রহ্মশক্তির অগ্নিময় অভিব্যক্তি, ব্রহ্মবাণীর প্রতীকধ্বনি।

**"The God of faith is the sublime I AM. In time He is always NOW, in space always HERE.**

**"As outwardly in all objects, so inwardly in the recesses of the heart, faith beholdeth the Living God.**

**"The eyes close, and the inward Kingdom revealeth God. The eyes open and all objects in external nature reveal the resplendent spirit and breathe His presence. Thus within and without, faith liveth always in the midst of blazing fire, the fire of God's presence"—True Faith.**

তাঁর কাছে বিশ্বাস মানে ব্রহ্মস্বরূপত্বলাভের প্রয়াস—

**"Faith is perpetual progress heavenward."**

এই বিশ্বাস পরিপক্বতা লাভ করলে প্রেমোদয় হয় এবং সে প্রেম ঈশ্বর, মনুষ্য ও সর্বজীবের সমভাবে পরিব্যাপ্ত হয়।

**"The maturity of faith is love, for love completeth the union which faith beginneth."**

**"As love makes man one with Divinity, so it makes man one with Humanity. Love is a heavenly passion that rolls ceaselessly onward. Love's growth is illimitable ; it admits of infinite expansion...when it grows forth it knows no bound."**

এই প্রেমের মূল হচ্ছে আত্মত্যাগ—

“Self-sacrifice is a necessity in the kingdom of love. Love comes in when self has gone out. Love grows when self withers away.”

কেশবচন্দ্র রাজা রামমোহনের পদাঙ্ক অনুসরণ ক’রে পাশ্চাত্য জাতির সঙ্গে ভারতের আধ্যাত্মিক যোগ স্থাপন করতে সেদেশে গিয়েছিলেন, অথচ ভারতের স্বাভাব্য ও ভারতের বাণীকে তিনি কখনও বিস্মৃত হন নি। স্বাধীনতা ছিল তাঁর চরিত্রের একটি প্রধান বিশেষত্ব, এবং ভারতের জাতীয়তাবোধকে স্পষ্ট ভাবে উদ্ভূত করেন প্রথমে কেশবচন্দ্র। তাঁর কাছে স্বাধীনতা মানে দেহমনের সর্বাঙ্গীন প্রমুক্তি, বুদ্ধির মুক্তি, বিশ্বাসের মুক্তি, আচারের মুক্তি, বিচারের মুক্তি। স্বাধীনতা সম্বন্ধে তাঁর বাণী প্রশিধানযোগ্য।

“স্বাধীনতাই হইল আদি শব্দ। অধীনতার শৃঙ্খলে শরীর-মনকে বদ্ধ হইতে দেওয়া হইবে না।...দাস হাওয়াই পাপ। আসক্তি সংসারের রাজা হইলে মরিতে হয়। যে বাড়ীতে বাই, রাগ বলে দেখ আমার কত দাসদাসী, লোভ বলে দেখ কত আমার চাকর। দাসত্ববিধি সকলের মধ্যে প্রবিষ্ট হইয়া একেবারে পোড়াইয়া মরিতেছে। হা বিধাতঃ, স্বাধীনতা যে মুক্তি, অধীনতা যে নরক!...ঈশ্বরের আমরা অধীন, এইজন্তই সম্পূর্ণ স্বাধীন।”—জীবনবেদ।

“হে দয়াময়, হে স্বাধীন পুরুষ, মহামন্ত্র স্বাধীনতা কি আশ্চর্য্য মন্ত্র। দয়া করিয়া যদি আমাকে এই মন্ত্রে দীক্ষিত করিবে, তবে আমার ও আমার ভাই ভগ্নীর মঙ্গলের জন্ত আমরাদিগের সকলের মধ্যে স্বাধীনতার ভাব বৃদ্ধি করিয়া দাও।”

“অধীনতা মানুষকে মারিয়া ফেলিতেছে। স্বাধীনতা প্রদাতা



কোথায় রহিলে? মানুষ কেন এত কষ্ট পাইতেছে? অধীনতা-  
ভাবের সঙ্গে একবার বুদ্ধ আরম্ভ হউক। মা শক্তিরূপা, হুক্মারে শত্রুদল  
তাড়াও! আর পরের দাসত্ব করিব না। বুঝিতেছি, মা, অধীনতা-  
দাসত্ব ভয়ানক নরক।”

কেশবচন্দ্রের পাপবোধ অসামান্য প্রবল ছিল। এই পাপবোধ  
তঁাহার অন্তরে অতি বাল্যকালেই প্রকাশিত হয়।

পাপ বলতে কেশবচন্দ্র কি বুঝতেন, তা তাঁর বাক্য থেকেই  
আমরা জানতে পারি—

“চুরি ডাকাতি, পরদ্রব্যহরণকে পৃথিবীর অভিধানে পাপ বলে।  
যিনি তোমাদের নিকটে এখন কথা কহিতেছেন, ইঁহার অভিধানে  
পাপ গ্লানি, পাপ ব্যাধি, পাপ অসুস্থাবস্থা, পাপ দৌর্বল্য, পাপ পাপ  
করিবার সম্ভাবনা। আমি পাপকে পাপ বলিয়া নিশ্চিন্ত থাকি নাই,  
পাপের সম্ভাবনাকে ভয়ঙ্কর দেখিয়াছি।...জড়তা দৌর্বল্য আসক্তি  
কতই হৃদয়ের ভিতরে।...দেখি কেবলই পাপ।”

টাউনহলের প্রসিদ্ধ বক্তৃতা “Am I an Inspired Prophet”—  
তার মধ্যেও এই পাপবোধের কথা আছে—

“Whenever I go to my God to pray, I see that there  
is something terribly foul in me which must be cleansed.  
Actually I may not have committed all these sins. But  
what of that? A sinner is judged not by his actual  
performance of sinful deeds, but by his sinful propensi-  
ties. The seat of corruption is not in the hand, but in  
the heart. Not what is actual, but what is potential,  
shows out real character. I take into account not only

what I am to-day, but what I may be to-morrow. I see the roots of all vices and iniquities in my mind."

কেশবচন্দ্র সম্বন্ধে তাঁর সমসাময়িক বহু মনীষী যে সাক্ষ্য রেখে গেছেন, তা দেখলে আমরা বুঝতে পারি যে, তিনি কত বড় প্রভাবশালী লোক ছিলেন।

ঠাকুরদাস মুখোপাধ্যায় তাঁর 'সাহিত্যমঞ্জল' পুস্তকে লিখেছে—

"পাশ্চাত্যশিক্ষাপ্রদীড়িত, বেকনবিলোড়িতমস্তিষ্ক এপিকিউরাস-শিষ্যদিগকে ধর্মশিক্ষা দিতে তিনিই অধিকতর সমর্থ, বিধিমতপ্রকারে উপযুক্ত। পাশ্চাত্য প্রত্যক্ষ বিজ্ঞানের অঙ্কার প্রধান প্রশ্ন—সামঞ্জস্য। নববিধানাচার্যের নববিধানের অবতারণা সামঞ্জস্য ও সমন্বয়ের জন্ত।"

কেশবচন্দ্রের ধর্ম যে সামঞ্জস্যের ও সমন্বয়ের, এ কথা তিনি নিজেও বলে গেছেন।

"The new faith is absolutely synthetical. Its life is in unity above everything else. It values synthesis above analysis, one above many."

"As a member of the Universal Theistic Church, I have protested against all manner of sectarian antipathy and unbrotherliness, and advocated the unification of all churches and sects in the love of one True God...All nations are pressing forward to the Kingdom of God. Let not India sleep or lag behind. Rouse up the millions of her sons and daughters and cast off the fetters with which they are enchained to idolatry and caste...Preach not lifeless dogmas or creeds; form no narrow sect or clan. Faith in the living God is your

only creed—a creed of fiery enthusiasm and invincible power...And let your words be of love and peace, not of sectarian antipathy. Love all parties, and gratefully accept all that is good and true in each."

অতএব ভিক্টোরিয়া-মেমোরিয়ালহলে কেশবের যে প্রতিমূর্তি প্রতিষ্ঠিত আছে, তার কাছে বাইবেল, আবেস্তা, ঋগ্বেদ ও কোরাণ স্থাপন করা সম্ভবতই হয়েছে—কারণ সৰ্ব্বদেশের শ্রেষ্ঠ ধর্ম্যগুলির সমন্বয় হয়েছে তাঁর মধ্যে।

কেশবচন্দ্রের আন্তরিকতা ও অসাধারণ ওজস্বী বাগ্মিতার সাক্ষ্য বহু বিশিষ্ট ব্যক্তি দিয়ে গেছেন—

*Rev. R. T. Davis of England—*

I have been reading Keshub Chunder Sen's addresses, and seem to be caught in a rhythm of flame, as if listening to a fervent living voice of a man of fire.

*Swami Vivekananda—*

The genuine orator exercises a sort of hypnotism over his audience. I have listened to many orators, Indian, English and American; but Keshub Chunder Sen is easily the greatest of all,

*N. G. Chandavrkar—*

I have heard several orators both in this country and in England; but Keshub Chunder Sen's oratory stands distinguished in my memory by the fact that it was the oratory of a God-inspired man. It is as a God-inspired man that Keshub Chunder Sen deserves to live immortal in the hearts of his countrymen.

*T. E. Stephens. Liberal leader—*

Throughout this never-to-be-forgotten oration he held his audience spell-bound and enraptured. His voice so melodious and persuasive, and seemed like music to responsive ears ; and his words themselves at times were heard as if they were descending from a region of light and glory which the audience had not before experienced.

*Surendranath Banerjee—*

His was the word that broke the spell, that roused the sleeper from his sleep, and communicated the flutter of a new life into an all but dead system.

*Robert Knight—*

When Keshub speaks the world listens.

শিবনাথ শাস্ত্রী বলেছেন—

“সেই কালের মধ্যে বঙ্গ-সমাজে চারিটি শক্তি দেখা ছিল।... চারিটি মানুষ, কেশবচন্দ্র সেন, বঙ্কিমচন্দ্র চট্টোপাধ্যায়, দীনবন্ধু মিত্র ও দ্বারকানাথ বিদ্যাভূষণ, এই কালের মধ্যে বঙ্গবাসীর চিত্তকে বিশেষ-ভাবে অধিকার করিয়াছিলেন।”

বাস্তবিক কেশবচন্দ্রের কাছে বাংলা দেশ নানাপ্রকারে ঋণী। রাজা রামমোহন রায় যেমন বাংলা গদ্যকে আকার দিয়েছিলেন, কেশবচন্দ্র তেমনি তাতে প্রাণসঞ্চার করেছিলেন। রামমোহনের পরে মহর্ষি, বিদ্যাসাগর, অক্ষয়কুমার দত্ত প্রভৃতি গদ্য রচনার দ্বারা বাংলা ভাষাকে সৌষ্ঠবশালী করছিলেন বটে, কিন্তু কেশবচন্দ্র তাতে লালিত্য মাধুর্য্য আনয়ন করলেন, যা বঙ্কিমের হাতে অধিকতর পরিমার্জিত হ’ল। রামমোহনের পরে ও বঙ্কিমের পূর্বে কেশব-

চক্রে গল্প রচনাই সরল সরস প্রাঞ্জল ভাবে অপূৰ্ণ শ্রীমণ্ডিত দেখতে পাই। সাহিত্যের ইতিহাসে কেশবচক্রে এই দানের কথা আমরা বিস্মৃত হ'তে বসেছি। তিনি যে তাঁর শিষ্যগণের দ্বারা অনুবাদের ভিত্তি দিয়ে অল্প ভাষার ও অল্প ধর্মের ভাবসম্পদের সহিত আমাদের পরিচয় সাধন করতে চেয়েছিলেন, সে-কথাও আমরা ভুলে যেতে বসেছি। আর কেশবচক্রেই প্রথমে বাংলা রচনায় মিষ্টিসিঁজিম্ আনয়ন করেন। একটি মাত্র উদাহরণ এখানে উদ্ধৃত ক'রে দেখাতে চাই, তাঁর ভাষার লালিত্য ও ভাবের গূঢ়বাদ—

“সুখ কি পেয়েছি ! তোমার সিঁদুরের মতো ঠোঁট দেখে আমার কানো ঠোঁট সিঁদুর হয়ে গেল। হাসিতে কেঁপে উঠল ! এ কি হয়েছে ! আমি তোমার হাসিতে মিশিয়ে যাব।”

“তোমার প্রেমখানা ভারি কোমল, ফুলগুলোও টিপলে বোধ হয় যেন পাথর তোমার প্রেমের তুলনায়।”

“হে পুণ্যময় জগদীশ, ইচ্ছা করে দৌড়ে গিয়ে গায়ে হাত দি তোমার ! কেন এমন স্নন্দর হয়ে এলে ! আপনার মুখ আপনি আঁক, এ বেদেও নাই, কোরাণেও নাই।”

কেশবচক্রে সাধক দ্রষ্টাশ্রয়ি ছিলেন। মানুষ অনেক আসে, অনেক চলে যায়। কে তাদের খবর রাখে। তারা অপর মানুষের প্রতিধ্বনি, তাদের গায়ে ধর্মের ছাপ, সম্প্রদায়ের ছাপ, শাস্ত্রের ছাপ। মাঝে মাঝে হঠাৎ অগ্নিবরণ কেতন উড়িয়ে এক একজন মানুষ আসেন, যারা গির্জার নন, মসজিদের নন, কোনো বিশেষ দেশের বা কালের নন। তাঁরা পুরাতন জীর্ণতাকে উন্মূলিত ক'রে নবযুগের সৃষ্টি করেন, তাঁদের সংস্পর্শে জড় জীবন্ত হয়ে ওঠে। তাঁদের প্রাণ অগ্নিশিখার

গ্রায় জ্যোতির্ষ্ময়, হুরন্ত স্বাধীন তাঁরা, একমাত্র সত্যের পূজারী । তাঁরা  
চিরদিন যুগধর্মী, অশাস্ত, বিদ্রোহী, চলার মস্ত বিলাবার জন্ত তাঁরা  
পথিক । কেশবচন্দ্র, এই দলের একজন শ্রেষ্ঠ লোক ছিলেন । তাই  
আজ বাঙালী শ্রদ্ধানত মস্তকে তাঁকে প্রণাম করছে । তাঁর মহান  
আদর্শ বাঙালীকে অনুপ্রাণিত করুক ।

(১৩৪০ সালের পৌষ মাসের “প্রবাসী” হইতে উদ্ধৃত)

## আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্র ও বাংলার নবযুগ

(ঢাকা নববিধান ব্রহ্ম-মন্দিরে কেশব-স্মৃতিসভায় প্রদত্ত বক্তৃতা)

শ্রীমোহিতলাল মজুমদার

আচার্য্য কেশবচন্দ্রের বাৎসরিক স্মৃতিসভায় আপনারা আমাকে কিছু বলিবার জ্ঞাত্ব আহ্বান করিয়াছেন, ইহাতে আমি যেমন এক দিকে আমার প্রতি আপনাদের এই অনুগ্রহের জ্ঞাত্ব কৃতজ্ঞ, তেমনই আর এক দিকে বড়ই সঙ্কোচ বোধ করিতেছি। কারণ কেশবচন্দ্রের মত একজন ধর্ম্মবীর মহাপুরুষের সম্বন্ধে আমার মত সাধনাহীন ব্যক্তির বলিবার কিই বা থাকিতে পারে? ধর্ম্ম-সাধন বা ধর্ম্ম-তত্ত্বের অনুশীলন আমি কখনও করি নাই। কেশব যে সাধনমন্ত্র প্রচার করিয়াছিলেন, সেই ভক্তির উৎসাহকে অগ্নিহোত্রীর মত ষাঁহারা রক্ষা করিয়া আসিতেছেন—ষাঁহারা কেবলমাত্র মত বা তত্ত্ব নহে, কেশবের জীবন-বেদের সেই অপৌরুষেয় আর্ষ দীপ্তিকে নিজ-জীবনে সঞ্চারিত করিয়াছেন, তাঁহাদের নিকট আমিই শিক্ষার্থী; কেশবের সেই নিগূঢ় ধর্ম্ম-তত্ত্বের সম্বন্ধে আমার বলিবার কিছুই নাই।

কিন্তু ধর্ম্মপ্রচারক কেশবচন্দ্রের জীবন আর এক দিক দিয়া আলোচনা করিবার যোগ্য। এই জাতির গত-যুগের ইতিহাসে যে সমস্ত ও সঙ্কট ক্রমশঃ ঘনাইয়া উঠিয়াছিল,—কেশবচন্দ্র তাহারই একটি ফুলিঙ্গ। জাতির সেই ইতিহাস বুঝিতে হইলে, কেশবচন্দ্রকেও বুঝিতে হইবে, স্মরণ করিতে হইবে। আমাদের দেশ, আমাদের

জাতীয় প্রকৃতির নিয়মে, সকল সমস্তাই মূলে একটা আধ্যাত্মিক সঙ্কট-রূপেই দেখা দেয়। কেশবের মধ্যে ইহা বিশেষ করিয়া সেই আকারই ধারণ করিয়াছিল। যুগ ও জাতির প্রতিনিধিরূপে কেশব-জীবনের আদর্শ ও তাঁহার কর্মপ্রচেষ্টা আমি যে রূপ বুঝিয়াছি, তাহাই আজ আপনাদের নিকট নিবেদন করিব।

এ যুগের ধর্ম্মান্দোলনের সঙ্গে যে সমস্তা বিশেষ করিয়া জড়িত ছিল, বাহার সমাধান একটা সজ্ঞান সুস্পষ্ট অভিপ্রায় রূপে সেই আন্দোলনে শক্তি সঞ্চার করিয়াছিল, তাহা মুখ্যতঃ, মোক্ষলাভ নয়, জাতির জীবনকে নূতন করিয়া একটা নৈতিক ভিত্তির উপরে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিবার প্রয়োজনচিস্তাই তাহার মূল। সমাজরক্ষা বা লোকসংস্থিতির জগ্ন যে নীতি-মার্গ বা Law তাহাই ছিল, এ যুগের ধর্ম্মসমস্তা। এই ধর্ম্মকে নূতন করিয়া উদ্ধার করা, তাহাকে যুগোপযোগী রূপ দিয়া জাতির জীবনে সঞ্চারিত করিয়া যুগ-সঙ্কটে পরিত্রাণলাভের উপায় আবিষ্কার করাই সেকালের বাঙ্গালী মনীষিগণের একমাত্র ভাবনা ছিল। সকলের ধারণা এক ছিল না—আদর্শ পৃথক ছিল। কেশবচন্দ্র এই সমস্তার সমাধানে ভগবদভক্তি ও বিশ্বাসের দ্বারা জাতির নৈতিক উন্নতিসাধনকেই শ্রেষ্ঠ উপায় বলিয়া মনে করিয়াছিলেন, তাঁহার চরিত্রে ও কর্ম্মজীবনে এই অভিনব আদর্শের অম্লপ্রেরণা আপাতঃদৃষ্টিতে বিজাতীয় ভাবাপন্ন বলিয়া মনে হয়; কিন্তু একটু ভিতরে দৃষ্টি করিলে, তাহার মধ্যে বাঙ্গালী ভাব-প্রকৃতি ও বাঙ্গালী-প্রতিভারই এক নূতন অভিব্যক্তি দেখা যায়। সে যুগের সংস্কার-আন্দোলনের ইতিহাসে কেশবচন্দ্রের এই বাঙ্গালিয়ানাই আমাকে মুগ্ধ করে। পাশ্চাত্য সাহিত্যের প্রভাব বাঙ্গালীর প্রতিভায় কি ভাবে প্রতিফলিত হইয়াছে,



তাহা আমরা দেখিয়াছি, পাশ্চাত্য ধর্ম-নীতি একজন বাঙ্গালীর হৃদয়ে  
কিরূপ সাড়া জাগায়, কেশবচন্দ্রের প্রতিভায় তাহার একটি বিশিষ্ট  
প্রমাণ আমরা পাইয়াছি। কেশবচন্দ্র যে ধর্ম-প্রচার করিয়াছিলেন—  
যুগের প্রভাব ও জাতির প্রতিভা দুইই তাহাতে প্রতিফলিত হইয়াছে।  
এই দিক দিয়া কেশবকে বুঝিবার প্রয়োজন আছে।

ধর্ম-জিজ্ঞাসা ও ধর্ম-সাধন, এবং ধর্ম-প্রচার এক নহে; উভয়ের  
প্রয়োজন স্বতন্ত্র। যে কারণে যে ধর্ম প্রচারযোগ্য হয়, জগতের  
ইতিহাসে তাহার একাধিক বড় দৃষ্টান্ত আছে। প্রাচীনকালে এই  
ভারতবর্ষেই সেইরূপ ধর্ম ও তাহার প্রচার প্রথম প্রকটিত হয়। ধর্ম  
যখন জাতি বা সমাজের কল্যাণকে অতিক্রম করিয়া ব্যক্তি বা  
সম্প্রদায় বিশেষের আধ্যাত্মিক সাধনার বস্তু হইয়া দাঁড়ায়, এবং তাহার  
সাধন-পন্থা ‘ক্ষুরশ্রু ধারা নিশিতা ছুরত্যাগ’ বলিয়া বাস্তব জীবনের  
ক্ষেত্র হইতে একরূপ নির্বাসিত হয়, তখনই লোকস্থিতিমূলক ধর্মের  
প্রণয়ন ও প্রচার একান্ত আবশ্যক হইয়া উঠে। শাক্যমুনি ঐতিহাসিক  
কালের প্রথম ধর্ম-প্রচারক। তাঁহার ধর্ম শুদ্ধ সাধনার ধর্ম নয়—  
জ্ঞান-যুক্তিমূলক পুরুষকারের ধর্ম। লোকধর্মের আর এক আদর্শ  
আছে; প্রাচীন সেমীয় জাতির মধ্যেই তার সমধিক বিকাশ ঘটিয়াছিল।  
এ ধর্মও সমাজ-শাসনমূলক, লোকসংস্থিতিই ইহার মূলগত অভিপ্রায়।  
প্রাচীন যিহুদীয় ধর্ম স্বজাতি গোষ্ঠীর জগুই প্রণীত হইয়াছিল। রাজা  
বা পিতারূপে এক ঈশ্বরের ধারণা করিয়া প্রেরিত পুরুষগণ ঈশ্বরাদেশ  
প্রচার করিতেন; সেই আদেশপালন সর্বপ্রকার বিনাশ হইতে  
পরিব্রাজ্যের এক মাত্র উপায়। এই একেশ্বরবাদ রুদ্ধ কঠিন শাসনবাদ  
হইতে ক্রমে ঈশ্বরবাদের ভক্তি-ধর্মে পরিণত হইয়াছিল এবং স্বজাতি

বা গোষ্ঠীর গণ্ডী অতিক্রম করিয়া সমগ্র মানবগোষ্ঠীকে গ্রহণ করিয়া-ছিল। এ দেশীয় প্রাচীন আৰ্য্যগণের সমাজেও এক ধরনের ব্রহ্মবাদ প্রচলিত ছিল; তাহাও কেবল আৰ্য্যগোষ্ঠীর ইহলৌকিক ও পারলৌকিক কল্যাণের জন্য বিহিত হইয়াছিল, প্রচারযোগ্য ছিল না। কিন্তু এই অতি সহজ সরল—বায়ু ও আলোকের মত জীবনীয় ব্রহ্মবাদ ভারত-বর্ষের জল-মাটিতে অক্ষুণ্ণ থাকিতে পারে নাই—অদ্বৈত তত্ত্ব ও নানা তান্ত্রিক সাধন-পদ্ধতি সেই আৰ্য্যধর্মকে হিন্দুধর্মে রূপান্তরিত করিয়াছে। ব্রহ্মের সহিত বিশুদ্ধ ভক্তিধর্ম মিলিত হইয়া নানা সম্প্রদায়ের, নানা তন্ত্রের, সৃষ্টি করিয়াছে বটে, কিন্তু অদ্বৈত-ব্রহ্মবাদের ছায়া স্তূদুর প্রসারিত হইয়া, ধর্মকে শেষ পর্য্যন্ত সুস্পষ্ট সামাজিক প্রয়োজনের ক্ষেত্র হইতে সরাইয়া, ব্যক্তি বা সম্প্রদায়ের আধ্যাত্মিক প্রয়োজন সাধনেই বিশেষ করিয়া নিয়োজিত রাখিয়াছে। এই অত্যাচ্ছ আধ্যাত্মিক আদর্শের প্রতি লক্ষ্য রাখিয়া যে সমাজবিধি প্রস্তুত হইয়াছিল তাহা সেকালের জনসমাজের কীদৃশ কল্যাণ কি ভাবে সাধন করিয়াছিল তাহা বলা কঠিন—আজিকার আদর্শে তাহা নির্ণয় করাও বোধ হয় সম্ভব হইবে না। কিন্তু পরবর্ত্তী কালে এই অধ্যাত্মসাধন ও সামাজিক হিতসাধনের মধ্যে সামঞ্জস্যের অভাব ছিল, তাহাতে সংশয় নাই। অপেক্ষাকৃত আধুনিক কালের, এই বাংলা দেশেই, প্রায় পাঁচশত বৎসর পূর্বে, যে নবধর্মের অভ্যুদয় হইয়াছিল তাহাতেও এ সমস্তার সম্যক মীমাংসা হয় নাই। নিয়ম-ধর্মের পরিবর্ত্তে ধর্মমূলক ভক্তিরসের প্রাবনে জাতির প্রকৃতি আরও কোমল হইয়া পড়িয়াছিল, সমাজ আত্মস্থ না হইয়া কতকটা আত্মহারা হইয়াছিল। সমগ্র মুসলমান-অধিকার-কালে, আত্মোন্নতি অপেক্ষা আত্মরক্ষার চেষ্টাই প্রবল হইতে দেখা

বাণ; সে কালে এই আত্মরক্ষার উপায় হইয়াছিল আত্মসঙ্কোচ। এই জগত্ই চৈতন্য-প্রবর্তিত-ভক্তি-ধর্ম সামাজিক সংস্কার ও সংগঠন কর্মে দুঃসাহসী হইতে পারে নাই।

অতএব দেখা যাইতেছে, ধর্মের যে আর এক আদর্শ আছে, লোকসংস্থিতিই যাহার মুখ্য অভিপ্রায়—ধর্মের যে নীতি ব্যবহারিক লোকযাত্রাকে নিয়ন্ত্রিত করিতে পারে, তাহা আমাদের দেশে বহুদিন প্রচারিত হয় নাই। আমরা ধর্ম বলিতে ব্যক্তিগত মোক্ষসাধনার আদর্শই বুঝি; এই মোক্ষলাভের সাধনায়, ব্যক্তির অধিকারভেদ মানি। প্রত্যেক জীবই কর্ম অনুসারে অন্ন হইতে স্বতন্ত্র, অতএব সাধন-মন্ত্র সকলের পক্ষে এক হইতে পারে না। মানুষ মাত্রেই এক ধর্ম-পরিবারভুক্ত বটে, কিন্তু তুল্যাধিকারসম্পন্ন নয়; একই গোষ্ঠীপতি ভগবানের সম্মান বলিয়া সকলেই একই সত্যের অধিকারী—এ পারণা আমাদের নিকট নিতান্তই হাশ্বকর। অধিকারভেদে একই সত্যের নানারূপ, কোনটাই মিথ্যা নহে; মানসিক ও আধ্যাত্মিক উন্নতি হিসাবে যাহার যতটুকু অধিকার তাহাই তাহার পরম সত্য। এই নব্বের আধ্যাত্মিক মর্ম যতই গভীর হউক, এ আদর্শের মূলে যত গভীর সত্যই নিহিত থাক, ইহার ফলে যে সমাজ-ব্যবস্থার উদ্ভব হইয়াছে, তাহাতে সামাজিক নীতি-সত্যের সম্যক মর্যাদা রক্ষিত হয় নাই। যতদিন বাহিরের সঙ্গে সংঘাত গুরুতর হইয়া উঠে নাই—অহিন্দু সেমীয় সভ্যতার সহিত সংঘর্ষ ঘটে নাই, ততদিন এই বাস্তব-স্পর্কী আধ্যাত্ম-সাধনা কতকটা নির্বিঘ্নেই চলিয়াছিল। কিন্তু পরে, বিশ্বধর্মের প্রচণ্ড আঘাতে, বিজাতির প্রবলতর রাষ্ট্রীয় শক্তির উৎপাতে যখন এ জাতির দুর্বলতা প্রকাশ পাইল, তখন এই ধর্ম বাহিরের

জীবন ও সামাজিক নীতি-সত্যকে পাশ কাটাইয়া গুহ তাত্ত্বিক সাধনমার্গে আত্মাগোপন করিল; যে-ধর্ম সমাজকে ধরিয়া রাখে তাহার প্রতি উদাসীন হইয়া আমরা জীবনে মিথ্যাচারী, এবং ধর্ম-সাধনায় আধ্যাত্মিক হইয়া উঠিলাম।

ইহার পর যাহা ঘটিল তাহা সকলেই জানেন। ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর আরম্ভ হইতেই আমরা নিজেদের দুর্গতি সম্বন্ধে ক্রমশঃ সচেতন হইয়া উঠিলাম—যে সঙ্কট সম্বন্ধে এতদিন আমাদের কোনও চৈতন্যই ছিল না, তাহাই মর্যাস্তিক রূপে উপলব্ধি করিলাম। ইংরাজী সাহিত্য ও ইংরাজ চরিত্রের সংস্পর্শে আসিয়া আমরা সবচেয়ে বেশী করিয়া বুঝিলাম আমাদের নৈতিক দীনতা, জাতীয় চরিত্রের শোচনীয় অবনতি, বৃহৎকে ত্যাগ করিয়া ক্ষুদ্রের প্রতি আসক্তির জন্ত আত্মার জড়তা। ইংরাজী শিক্ষা রীতিমত আরম্ভ হইবারও পূর্বে এ চেতনা বাঙ্গালীকে অধিকার করিয়াছে, নিজেদের হীন অবস্থার জন্ত লজ্জিত হইবার মত আত্মজ্ঞান তাহার হইয়াছে। পুরাতন রাষ্ট্র-ব্যবস্থার উচ্ছেদে, এবং নূতন বিদেশী শক্তির সহিত কর্মক্ষেত্রে ঘনিষ্ঠ পরিচয়ের ফলে, বাঙ্গালী আবার ভাবিতে আরম্ভ করিল—এই ভাবনাই তাহার স্তম্ভ মনীষা জাগাইল। কারণ, বাঙ্গালী চরিত্রবলে যতই হীন হউক, তাহার ভাবগাহিতা-শক্তি অসাধারণ, যুগান্তরের ভাব-সত্যকে সে অবিলম্বে জ্ঞান-গোচর করিতে পারে। ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর প্রাক্কালেই বাঙ্গালী বুঝিতে সক্ষম করিল, যুগ-প্রয়োজন কি। রাজা রামমোহন রায় বাঙ্গালীর হইয়া সর্বপ্রথমে এসম্বন্ধে সচেতন হইয়াছিলেন। ধর্মের যে অপর অর্থ আমি ইতিপূর্বে আপনাদের নিকটে উল্লেখ করিয়াছি সেই অর্থে রামমোহন একটা ধর্মের আবশ্যকতা অনুভব করিয়াছিলেন। বিচার-

বুদ্ধির তীক্ষ্ণ অন্বেষণে, জাতির মনোভূমি হইতে সকল অন্ধবিশ্বাস, এবং ধর্মসাধনার ক্ষেত্র হইতে সর্বপ্রকার তত্ত্বমন্ত্র বা অলৌকিক অনুভূতির চর্চা দূর করিয়া, তিনি একটি যুক্তিসম্মত, নীতিমূলক ধর্ম দেশবাসীর জন্ত প্রণয়ন করিতে চাহিয়াছিলেন। রামমোহনের এই উদ্ভব ও তাহার অন্তর্গত অভিপ্রায় আজও কেহ বুঝিতে সক্ষম বা সম্মত হয় নাই। রামমোহন যে একেশ্বরবাদের পক্ষপাতী ছিলেন, পারলৌকিক কল্যাণচিন্তাই তাহার মুখ্য কারণ নয়; সাধু-সন্ত বা ভক্ত-ভাগবৎগণ যে শ্রেণীর ধার্মিক, রামমোহন নিজে সেরূপ ধার্মিক ছিলেন না। রামমোহনের প্রতিভার প্রধান কৃতিত্বই এই যে, তিনি, রাষ্ট্রে সমাজে ও শিক্ষায় একটা নূতন যুগোপযোগী আদর্শের সন্ধান করিয়াছিলেন—ভগবৎ-লাভের উৎকৃষ্টতর পন্থানির্দেশ, নূতন করিয়া মোক্ষশাস্ত্র রচনা, তাঁহার অভিপ্রায় ছিল না; বলহীনকে পার্থিব জীবনে শক্তিমান করিয়া তোলাই তাঁহার একমাত্র লক্ষ্য ছিল। মধ্য-যুগের ধার্মিকতার আদর্শকেই সংস্কার করিয়া পুনঃ প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিতে তিনি চান নাই; জীবনে উন্নতি লাভ করিতে হইলে, জাতিহিসাবে রাষ্ট্রে ও সমাজে সুপ্রতিষ্ঠ হইতে হইলে, প্রত্যক্ষকে স্বীকার কর, এবং তজ্জন্ত সহজ মানবীয় জ্ঞানবুদ্ধির আরাধনা কর—ইহাই ছিল তাঁহার ধর্ম। পৌত্তলিক ধর্মের ভাবসাধনায় যে বক্রকূটিল গহন-গূঢ় আরণ্য-পথ মানুষকে সহজ সত্য ও সামাজিক শক্তিসাধনা হইতে দূরে লইয়া যায়, ব্যক্তির ব্যক্তিত্ব খর্ব্ব করে, তাহাকে বর্জন কর। শ্রীযুক্ত গিরিজাশঙ্কর রায় চৌধুরী মহাশয় তাঁহার অতি সুচিন্তিত ও পাণ্ডিত্য-পূর্ণ গ্রন্থ “বিবেকানন্দ ও বাংলার উনবিংশ শতাব্দী”র একস্থানে রামমোহন সম্পর্কিত আলোচনায় রামমোহনের একখানি ইংরাজী

পত্রের যে অংশটি উদ্ধৃত করিয়াছেন তাহা অতিশয় অর্থপূর্ণ; আমিও এখানে তাহা উদ্ধৃত করা প্রয়োজন মনে করি। সে কয় ছত্র এইরূপ—

I regret to say that the present system of religion adhered to by the Hindus is not well calculated to promote their political interest...It is, I think, necessary that some change should take place in their religion at least for the sake of their political advantage and social comfort.

উক্ত গ্রন্থে প্রসঙ্গক্রমে রামমোহনের গ্রন্থ হইতে আর একটি উক্তি উদ্ধৃত হইয়াছে, তাহাও লক্ষ্য করিবার মত—

Genuine Christianity is more conducive to the moral, social and political progress of a people than any other human creed.

এ সকল হইতে স্পষ্ট প্রতীয়মান হয়, রামমোহন কেন ধর্মসংস্কার করিতে চাহিয়াছিলেন। খ্রীষ্টান সাহিত্য ও খ্রীষ্টান চরিত্র এবং খ্রীষ্টান রাজশক্তির প্রভাব একালে বাঙ্গালীর মনকে হঠাৎ একটা বড় ধাক্কা দিয়াছিল—তুলনায় নিজেদের হীনতাবোধ বড় বেশী করিয়া বাজিয়াছিল। বাঙ্গালী নূতন করিয়া, মানুষ্য হইতে চাহিল; এবং এক যুগের নিশাস্তকালে, অরুণোদয় প্রতীক্ষায়, পশ্চিমকেই পূর্বদিক্‌প্রান্ত বলিয়া তাহার দৃষ্টিমোহ হইয়াছিল। তথাপি রামমোহন একটা ধর্মমত সংকলন করিয়াছিলেন মাত্র—ধর্ম-প্রচারক ছিলেন না; তিনি কোনও পৃথক সমাজ স্থাপনের চেষ্টাও করেন নাই। রামমোহন চিন্তা করিয়াছিলেন, তর্ক করিয়াছিলেন, লেখালেখি করিয়াছিলেন।

তিনি যুক্তিবাদী ছিলেন, কোনও ভক্তিবিশ্বাসের আবেগ তাঁহার ছিল না—তাঁহার ধর্মও আবেগের ধর্ম ছিল না। তাই তিনি নবযুগের একটা আদর্শ নির্দেশ করিয়াছিলেন মাত্র, জাতির জীবনে বা তাহার হৃদয়ে তাহাকে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিবার কোন চেষ্টাই তিনি করেন নাই। রামমোহন তাঁহার ব্যক্তিগত জীবনে যে নীতির অনুসরণ করিয়াছিলেন—অপক্ষপাত সহকারে তাঁহার জীবনবৃত্ত আলোচনা করিলে তাঁহার যে ব্যক্তিস্বরূপ আমাদের দৃষ্টিগোচর হয়—তাহাতেই বুঝিতে পারি যে, তিনি ভক্তমণ্ডলীর অনুকরণীয় আদর্শরূপে নিজ জীবন যাপন করেন নাই। সেখানেও, তিনি বুদ্ধিমান ও শক্তিমান পুরুষের মত অটল অবিচলিতভাবে নিজের মনের মত জীবন যাপন করিয়াছিলেন, দেখিতে পাই। এই বীরমূর্ত্তি কোন সাধু, দরবেশ বা ভক্ত-সন্ন্যাসীর মূর্ত্তি নহে। রামমোহনের যে অসাধারণ মনস্বিতা আমাদের বিস্ময় উৎপাদন করে, তাহাও, নব্যত্বের অষ্টা বাঙ্গালী ব্রাহ্মণ পণ্ডিতের পক্ষে কিছুমাত্র অসম্ভব নহে। এই যে রামমোহন, ইঁহার পরিচয় সাম্প্রদায়িক ধর্মকোলাহলে আচ্ছন্ন হইয়া আছে। রামমোহন বাঙ্গালীর বরণীয় বটেন, কিন্তু কোনও ধর্ম বা সম্প্রদায় প্রতিষ্ঠার জন্ত নয়—রামমোহনই এ যুগে সর্বপ্রথম জাতির জড়বুদ্ধিকে সবলে আঘাত করিয়াছিলেন, স্বাধীন জ্ঞান-বুদ্ধির ক্ষেত্রে জনগণকে প্রবুদ্ধ করিতে চাহিয়াছিলেন।

কিন্তু রামমোহনের চেষ্টা ফলবতী হয় নাই, ইহাও সত্য। তাঁহার বাণীকে এ জাতি জীবনের মধ্যে পায় নাই। আজ রামমোহনকে লইয়া আমরা যে গৌরব করিতেছি, তাঁহার স্মৃতিপূজার যে সাড়ম্বর আয়োজনে মাতিয়াছি, তাহার আরও সঙ্গত কারণ থাকিলে ভাল

হইত। তাঁহার জীবন বা তাঁহার আদর্শ কোথাও সাক্ষাৎ ভাবে জাতিকে প্রভাবিত করে নাই, শতাব্দীব্যাপী সংগ্রামে আমাদের হৃদয়ের বল বৃদ্ধি করে নাই। তাঁহার মৃত্যুর অব্যবহিত পরে রামমোহনের নামে যে নূতন ধর্ম-সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইল তাহার মন্ত্রও ঠিক রামমোহনের মন্ত্র নয়; সে সমাজ এক অভিজাত-জ্ঞানী-সম্প্রদায় রূপে অচল হইয়া রহিল। কিন্তু নবযুগ বসিয়া ছিল না; বাঙ্গালীর চিন্তা-ক্ষেত্রে পাশ্চাত্য শিক্ষার হলকর্ষণ বন্ধ হয় নাই; বরং আরও গভীরভাবে সেই খনন-কার্য চলিতে লাগিল। ইহারই ফলে ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর মধ্যভাগে কেশবচন্দ্র সেন নামে আর এক বাঙ্গালীর অভ্যুদয় হইল। কেশবের ধর্ম-জীবনের উৎপত্তি ও বিকাশ এ যুগের পক্ষে আকস্মিক নয়, বরং সম্পূর্ণ স্বাভাবিক। কেশবচন্দ্রের মধ্যে বাঙ্গালী-প্রতিভার আর এক দিক নবযুগের সমস্তায় সাড়া দিয়াছিল। কেশব যুক্তিবাদী নহেন, ভক্তিবাদী;—কেশব যে শক্তিবলে যুগ-সঙ্কট উত্তীর্ণ হইতে চাহিলেন, সে শক্তি আত্মিক বিশ্বাসের শক্তি, তাই কেশব রামমোহনের মত নীতিবাদী নহেন—নীতিধর্মী; তিনি ধর্ম-প্রণেতা নহেন—ধর্ম-প্রচারক। তথাপি কেশব ও রামমোহনের লক্ষ্য এক—জাতির নৈতিক জীবনের সংস্কার-সাধন। রামমোহন যাহা বুদ্ধির সাহায্যে করাইতে চাহিয়াছিলেন, কেশব তাহাই করাইতে চাহিয়াছিলেন ধর্ম-বিশ্বাসের বলে। রামমোহন খ্রীষ্টান ধর্মনীতির শ্রেষ্ঠতা স্বীকার করিলেও, এবং সেমীয় একেশ্বরবাদের পক্ষপাতী হইলেও, তাঁহার ব্রাহ্মণ্য আভিজাত্য সংস্কার ত্যাগ করিতে পারেন নাই—বেদান্ত উপনিষদের দোহাই না দিয়া পারেন নাই। এইখানেই তাঁহার ‘ভাবের ঘরে চুরী’ ছিল, তিনি ভিতরে যাহা বুঝিয়াছিলেন, বাহিরে



তাহা খোলাখুলি স্বীকার করিতে রাজী ছিলেন না। এই আভিজাত্য-ভিমানের বশেই—নিজ ধর্মের পরিবর্তে যে পরধর্মের প্রতি আকৃষ্ট হইয়াছিলেন, তাহার প্রভাব স্বীকার না করিয়া—তিনি অতি প্রাচীন শাস্ত্র হইতে স্বপক্ষে প্রমাণ সংগ্রহ করিয়াছিলেন। কেশব এই আবরণটি উড়াইয়া দিলেন, নিজ ধর্মবিশ্বাস অকপটে স্বীকার করিলেন; কেশব বিদ্রোহী নব্যাবঙ্গের এক অভিনব মূর্তি। কেশবের ধর্মপ্রতিভা ছিল, তাহার সমস্ত হৃদয়মন ভক্তির ভাবাবেশে ব্যক্ত হইয়া উঠিত; সে সময়ে তাহার মুখে দিব্যপ্রভা ও কণ্ঠে দিব্যভারতীর উদয় হইত। পাশ্চাত্য যুক্তিবাদ যেমন রামমোহনের প্রতিভাকে ক্ষুরিত করিয়াছিল, পাশ্চাত্য ধর্মও তেমনই কেশবকে সঞ্জীবিত করিয়াছিল। এই দুই অগ্নি-পরীক্ষাই বাঙ্গালীকে উত্তীর্ণ হইতে হইয়াছে; কেশবের প্রতিভা খাঁটি বাঙ্গালীর প্রতিভা, কেশবের জয় ও পরাজয় সে যুগের বাঙ্গালীর ইতিহাসে অবশ্যস্তাবী ঘটনা।

কেশবের প্রতিভায় তিনটি বিষয় লক্ষ্য করিবার আছে—(১) তাহার স্ভারতীয় ধর্মপ্রেরণা; (২) ব্যক্তিগত বিবেকবুদ্ধি স্বীকার করিলেও কার্যতঃ তিনি ভক্তিয়োগী মিষ্টিক; (৩) কঠিন মত-নিষ্ঠা অপেক্ষা উদার ভাবগ্রাহিতা। এই তিনটি লক্ষণে আমরা তাহার সাধন-জীবনের যুগোপযোগিতা বুঝিবার চেষ্টা করিব।

কেশবের ধর্মজীবনে আমরা পর-ধর্মের প্রেরণা দেখিতে পাই। যিহুদীয় ধর্মপ্রবক্তাগণ—জন ব্যাপ্টিষ্ট (John the Baptist) সেন্ট পল ও যীশু—যে একজন ঈশ্বরপিপাসু হিন্দুসন্তানের ধর্মগুরু হইলেন, কেশবের ধর্মজীবনে ইহা কি কেবল একটা দৈবঘটনা? ইহার মূলে কি বাঙ্গালী চরিত্রের বৈশিষ্ট্য এবং যুগ-প্রভাব ও যুগ-সমস্যার একটা

ইঙ্গিত ছিল না ? ইংরাজি সাহিত্য, দর্শন ও ইতিহাসের সহিত ঘনিষ্ঠ পরিচয়ের প্রভাব ইহার মূলে ছিল সন্দেহ নাই—কিন্তু বাঙ্গালীর ভাব-প্রকৃতি ইহার জন্ত সমধিক দায়ী। সে যুগের ধর্মহীন নীতিহীন সমাজের পরিণাম-চিন্তা কেশবকে যে-ভাবে ব্যাকুল করিয়াছিল, তেমন আর কোনও ভাবুক বাঙ্গালীকে করে নাই। অতিশয় স্পর্শ-কাতর চিন্তা ও অতিশয় কলনাপ্রবণ হৃদয়ে যদি আধ্যাত্মিক সঙ্কট উপস্থিত হয়, যদি তাহার সঙ্গে আন্তরিকতা আত্মপ্রত্যয় ও চরিত্রবল থাকে, তবে সে যুগের পক্ষে যে রূপ ধর্মপ্রেরণা স্বাভাবিক কেশবচন্দ্রের মধ্যে তাহারই বিকাশ হইয়াছিল। যে খ্রীষ্টীয় ধর্মনীতির প্রতি রাম-মোহনের প্রকার কথা পূর্বে উল্লেখ করিয়াছি, কেশবচন্দ্রকেও সেই ধর্মনীতি বিশেষ ভাবে আকৃষ্ট করিয়াছিল। ইহা হইতে সে যুগের বাঙ্গালীর প্রতিভা কোন্ প্রধান সমস্তার সমাধানচিন্তায় উদ্বুদ্ধ হইয়াছিল তাহা আজ বিশেষ করিয়া স্মরণ রাখিতে হইবে। আমার মনে হয়, পাশ্চাত্য নয়, ইংরাজী সাহিত্যও নয়, ইংরাজের যে চরিত্রবল—বিজ্ঞতা জাতির যে পৌরুষময় প্রাণের ক্ষুর্তি সেকালে সমগ্র ভারত-বাসীকে মুগ্ধবিশ্বয়ে অভিভূত করিয়াছিল যাহার প্রভাবে ইংরাজ শুধুই রাজ্যজয় করে নাই, বহু শতাব্দীর অনাচারকলুষিত নৈতিক দুর্দশাগ্রস্ত জাতির হৃদয়ে আধিপত্য স্থাপন করিয়াছিল, সে যুগের বাঙ্গালী মনীষী ও বাঙ্গালী ভাবুক তাহাকেই বরণ করিয়া, আত্মসাৎ করিয়া জাতির জীবনে নবআদর্শ রূপে স্থাপন করিতে চাহিয়াছিলেন। কেশব এদেশে ইংরাজ-অধিকারের ইতিহাস জানিতেন। তাহার কারণ যেমন বুঝিয়াছিলেন তেমনই তাহার সফললাভের আশা করিয়াছিলেন। ভিনি-বিশ্বাস করিয়াছিলেন, ইহা অপ্রত্যাশিত ও আকস্মিক বলিয়াই,

ইহার মূলে মঙ্গলময় বিধাতার শুভ অভিপ্রায় আছে ; যে ধর্মনীতির প্রেরণায় ইংরাজ জাতি বড় হইয়াছে, ইংরাজের দৃষ্টান্তে ও সাহচর্যে তাহারই সায়তন্ম আমাদের জীবনে গ্রহণ করিতে পারিলেই আমাদের পরিত্রাণ আশু ও সহজ হইবে। ইংরাজের ভারত-বিজয়ের ফলে জাতির একটা মহৎ কল্যাণ সাধিত হইবে—এমন ধারণা সকলে সকল শিক্ষিত বাঙ্গালীর ছিল—বাঙ্গালী একটা বড় আশা করিয়াছিল। বঙ্কিমচন্দ্রও আশা করিতেন। ইংরাজের প্রতি এই শ্রদ্ধা বিজাতির প্রতি মনোভাব—ভাবনা ও কল্পনাশক্তির ফলে বাঙ্গালীই সর্ব্বাণে পোষণ করিয়াছিল; ইহারই ফলে পাশ্চাত্য শিক্ষাদীক্ষার প্রভাবে বাঙ্গালীই আধুনিক ভারতের যুগান্তর আনিয়াছে। কেশবের মধ্যে সেই বঙ্গালিয়ানারই বিকাশ হইয়াছিল, ধর্ম-প্রেরণার দিক দিয়া।

কেশবের ধর্ম-প্রেরণার মূলে ছিল পাপ-বোধ। অতি অল্প বয়সেই জাতির বহুকালসঞ্চিত পাপের পরিণাম চিন্তা তাঁহাকে ব্যাকুল করিয়াছিল। বৈষ্ণবকুলে জন্মগ্রহণ করিয়া তিনি প্রকৃতিতে বৈষ্ণব ছিলেন; কিন্তু চৈতন্যপ্রবর্তিত ধর্মে পাপ ও পাপমুক্তির তত্ত্ব গ্রাহ্য হইলেও, সে ধর্মের সাধনায় আর সে সরলতা ছিল না, জটিল রসতত্ত্ব ও নানা তাত্ত্বিক সাধন-পদ্ধতির দ্বারা তাহা আচ্ছন্ন হইয়া পড়িয়াছিল। কেশব বুঝিয়াছিলেন, মানুষকে মানুষ হিসাবেই উন্নত হইতে হইলে ঈশ্বরের সঙ্গে সাক্ষাৎ ব্যক্তি-সম্বন্ধ স্থাপন করিতে হইবে, সহজ স্বাভাবিক মানবীয় চেতনাকে অতিক্রম করিলে চলিবে না। সে সম্বন্ধ আপামর-সাধারণের পক্ষে একই ভাবে ও একই কারণে সহজ হওয়া চাই। এই সম্বন্ধ স্থাপনের উপায়—জ্ঞান নয়, ধ্যান নয়, গুরুদীক্ষাও নয়—প্রার্থনা। এই প্রার্থনাই গুরু—ভগবান ও মানুষের মধ্যে সহজ

যোগস্থাপনের একমাত্র সেতু। এই প্রার্থনার উপযোগী চিত্তের অবস্থা—পাপ-বোধ, দুর্বল অসহায় মানুষের ভয়ব্যাকুলতা। চিত্তের এই অবস্থা ও এই প্রার্থনাতত্ত্ব কেশবের জীবনে স্বতঃস্ফূর্ত হইয়াছিল, পূর্ব হইতেই তাঁহার মনকে খ্রীষ্টীয় সাধন-পদ্ধতির অমুকুল করিয়াছিল। কেশবের নীতিনিষ্ঠায় ভক্তের আত্ম-সমর্পণ ছিল, যুক্তিবাদীর অহঙ্কার ছিল না। প্রথম হইতেই এই নৈতিক চিত্তশুদ্ধির প্রয়োজন তিনি অনুভব করিয়াছিলেন, তাই খ্রীষ্টীয় সাধুর উক্তি—‘Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand’—তাঁহাকে এমন গভীর ভাবে বিচলিত করিয়াছিল।

কেশব রামমোহন-পন্থী ছিলেন না, ইহার পরেও তাহা বলা বোধ হয় নিম্প্রয়োজন। কেশব সজ্ঞানে ভক্তি-সাধনা করিতেন বটে, প্রচারক কেশব তাঁহার নব ধর্ম-মন্দিরে ভিত্তিমূলে সদাজাগ্রত জিজ্ঞাসাকে স্থান দিয়াছিলেন বটে, কিন্তু মন্দিরের অভ্যন্তরে তিনি বিশ্বাসকেই সর্বোচ্চ পীঠমণ্ডপে আসন দিয়াছিলেন; তিনি সকল জিজ্ঞাসার উত্তর চাহিতেন ভাগবতী প্রেরণার সমীপে। বাঙ্গালীর সম্মান, ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর সেই যুগে, নূতনতর জাতীয় সমস্যার সঙ্কটে এবং এক অভিনব শিক্ষাদীক্ষার আবহাওয়ায়, যে নূতনতর ভক্তের বেশে আবির্ভূত হইতে পারে, কেশব ছিলেন তাহাই। নদীয়ার জল-মাটীতে জুড়িয়ার ধর্মবীজ যে ফুল ফুটাইতে পারে কেশবের ধর্মজীবন সেই ফুল। কিন্তু নতন জ্ঞান-বিজ্ঞানের যুগে অবিমিশ্র ভক্তিকেও মিশ্ররূপ ধারণ করিতে হয়; কেশবের জীবনে সে দ্বন্দ্ব ছিল। তিনি সেই দ্বন্দ্বকে জ্ঞানতঃ অস্বীকার করিয়াছিলেন, কিন্তু যিনি তাঁহার সমগ্র চরিত্র আলোচনা করিবেন, তিনিই দেখিতে

পাইবেন, সে যুগের ধর্ম্মান্দোলনের পূর্বোক্তর ধারায় ইহাই কেশব-জীবনের বিশেষত্ব। এই জন্তই সে যুগের সংস্কারপন্থীদের মধ্যে একমাত্র কেশবের প্রতিপক্ষেই সত্যাকার ধর্ম্মপ্রতিপত্তি বলা বাইতে পারে। কারণ, ধর্ম্ম কেবল নীতির শাসন নয়; অথবা ঈশ্বর নামক কোনও কল্পিত সত্তাকে ভক্তিবিচারের দ্বারা প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিয়া, পরে নিজের বিবেক নামক অহংকারের সঞ্চিত তাহাকে নস্তু করিয়া আত্মপ্রসাদ লাভ করার পন্থাও নয়। ইহাই বিরুদ্ধে কেশব তাঁহার জলন্ত বিশ্বাসকে ভক্তিরসধারায় প্রবাহিত করিয়াছিলেন। কিন্তু তাঁহার প্রকৃতিতে জ্ঞান ও ভক্তির দ্বন্দ্ব ছিল; না থাকিলে তাঁহার জীবন এমন কখনই হইত না; বুঝি না, তিনি নব ধর্ম্মনিষ্ঠানে আশান্তরূপ সিদ্ধিলাভে বঞ্চিত হইতেন না। এই ভক্তি যেমন তাঁহাকে নিজ ধর্ম্ম-জীবনে জয়ী করিয়াছিল, তেমনই ধর্ম্মপ্রচারের অবিরোধী অধাবমায়ে তাঁহার ক্লান্ত শ্রান্ত ও বিফলমনোরূপ করিয়াছে। কেশব জ্ঞান-ভক্তি ও কর্ম্মের সমন্বয় চাহিয়াছিলেন; প্রকৃতি জ্ঞানপ্রধান না হইলে এমন সমন্বয় হয় না। কেশবের প্রকৃতি ছিল ভক্তিপ্রধান, তাই এইরূপ সমন্বয়ের আকাঙ্ক্ষা তাঁহার প্রতিভার নিদর্শন হইলেও, তিনি তাহা সাধন করিতে পাবেন নাই। বড় ভক্ত বড় বীরও বটেন; কেশবও বীর ছিলেন—তিনি ছিলেন উৎসাহ ও কর্ম্মবীর্যের অবতার। কিন্তু ধর্ম্মকে যে রূপে ও উপায়ে তিনি বহিঃসংসারে প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিতে চাহিয়াছিলেন তাহার জন্ত অত্যাধিক প্রতিভার প্রয়োজন। যে আসলে বৈষ্ণব তাহার শাক্ত অভিমান চলে না; কিন্তু যে শাক্ত তাহার পক্ষে বৈষ্ণব-নীতি দুর্ব্বল নয়। কেশব যে জ্ঞানী শাক্ত ছিলেন না, আমি তাহা বলিতেছি না, কিন্তু ভক্তিই ছিল তাঁহার প্রধান সম্বল, তাই

দ্বন্দ্ব কখনও ঘটে নাই। ‘Am I an inspired Prophet?’ নামক  
 সুবিখ্যাত বক্তৃতায় এই অন্তর-গূঢ় দ্বন্দ্বের সুস্পষ্ট আভাস আছে।  
 তিনি বলিতেছেন—

Pantheism and mysticism are things of Asia, while positivism and all the sciences of the day belong to Europe. My Church is an Asiatic Church. I am in my very bones and blood, in the very constitution of my soul, essentially an Asiatic. As an Asiatic, I would encourage and vindicate devotion to the devotion to the extent of mystic communion. But here you will probably say there is no harmonious development. It is all prayer and contemplation, and no work. I say there is harmony. If I am mystical am I not practical too? I am practical as an Englishman. If I am Asiatic in devotion, I am a European in practical energy. My creed is not dreamy sentimentalism, not quietism, not imagination. Energy, yes, energy—I have that in a great measure in my character and in my church.

কেশবের চরিত্রে এই শিশুর মত সারল্য ও আত্মপ্রত্যয় বড়ই  
 উপভোগ্য। “Am I not practical too?”—সেদিন কেশবের এই  
 উক্তি তাঁহার শ্রোতৃবর্গ কি ভাবে গ্রহণ করিয়াছিলেন জানি না,  
 কিন্তু এতদিন পরে আজ আমরা দূর কর্ণের এই আকুল প্রশ্ন শুনিয়া  
 বেদনা অনুভব করি। কেশব নিজের সম্বন্ধে যে কর্ম্মবীর্যের কথা  
 বলিয়াছেন, তাহা খুবই সত্য,—যে জলন্ত বিশ্বাস ও নৈতিক উৎসাহ  
 তাঁহার কর্ম্মজীবনে আমরা দেখিতে পাই, তাহাতেই তিনি আমাদের

দেশের নবযুগকে একটি বিশেষ দিক দিয়া অগ্রসর করিয়া দিয়াছিলেন। কিন্তু শেষ পর্য্যন্ত তিনি ‘মিষ্টিক’—উনবিংশ শতাব্দীতেও খ্রীষ্ট ও চৈতন্যের বংশধর। ইহাই তাঁহার আত্মার স্বধর্ম; তিনি যদি নিজ জীবনে সিদ্ধিলাভ করিয়াই সন্তুষ্ট থাকিতেন, তবে কথাই ছিল না। কিন্তু তিনি তাহা পারেন নাই; জাতির পরিভ্রাণের জন্ত যুগোচিত ধর্মচিন্তা তাঁহাকে ব্যাকুল করিয়াছিল; ইহাই তাঁহার মহত্ব, এই জন্তই তিনি সে যুগের একজন অরণীয় পুরুষ। বর্তমান যুগ ক্রমশঃই গণতন্ত্রের দিকে চলিয়াছে,—একেশ্বরবাদ একদিন মানুষের ভ্রাতৃত্ববন্ধন দূর করিয়াছিল, কিন্তু তাহার মূলে ছিল ঈশ্বরাদেশের কঠিন শাসন। ভক্ত কেশব এই শাসনকে স্বাধীন আত্মার সানন্দ স্বীকৃতির সহিত যুক্ত করিয়া লইলেও তিনি মানুষকে বড় করেন নাই, বরং সর্বত্র সকল কক্ষে, মিষ্টিক যোগীর মত, আত্মলব্ধ ঈশ্বরাদেশকেই শিরোধার্য্য করিয়াছেন। ইহাই চিরযুগের ভক্ত সাধকগণের চরিত্রনীতি। কিন্তু এ যুগের সাধনায় এই মধ্যযুগীয় ধর্মনীতি কতদূর সাফল্যলাভ করিতে পারে, কেশবের আজন্ম সাধনার পরিণাম লক্ষ্য করিলেই তাহা বুঝা যায়।

কেশবচন্দ্রের ধর্মজীবনের যে তৃতীয় লক্ষণটির কথা বলিয়াছি তাহা এই যে, ধর্মবিষয়ে কেশব মতবাদী না হইয়া ভাবগাহী ছিলেন—নিজ হৃদয়ের বিকাশকামনায় তিনি সর্বমত ও সর্বতন্ত্র হইতে সুপথ্য সংগ্ৰহ করিতেন; তাবুক ভাবপ্রবণ কেশব ধর্মপ্রেরণার ক্ষেত্রে একরূপ কবি ছিলেন। তাঁহার প্রাণের মধ্যে নিরন্তর একটি ভাবাধি প্রজ্জ্বলিত ছিল, তাহাতে তিনি কখনও কোথায়ও সাধনজীবনে স্থাণু হইয়া থাকিতে পারিতেন না। তিনি তাঁহার ‘জীবন-বেদ’ নামক গ্রন্থের এক প্রসঙ্গে বলিতেছেন—

“হে আত্মন! ধর্মজীবনের বাল্যকালে কি মত্রে দক্ষৌত হইয়াছিলে? আত্মা উত্তর দেয়, অগ্নিমত্রে। আমি অগ্নিমত্রে উপাসক, অগ্নিমত্রেই পক্ষপাতী। অগ্নিমত্রে কি? শীতলতা বুঝিতে হইলে উত্তাপ বুঝিতে হয়।

কি মনের চারিদিকে, কি সামাজিক অবস্থার চারিদিকে সততই উৎসাহের অগ্নি জালিয়া রাখিতাম। একদলের কাছে সেবা করিলাম, আর একটি দল কবে হইবে; দশটি দল প্রস্তুত করিলাম, আর দশটি দল কবে প্রস্তুত করিব; কতকগুলি লোকের সহিত আলাপ করিলাম, আর কতকগুলি লোকের সঙ্গে কিমে আলাপ করিতে পারিব; কতকগুলি শাস্ত্র সঙ্কলন করিয়া সত্য সংগ্রহ করিলাম, পাছে সেই সত্যগুলি লইয়া থাকিলে সেগুলি পুরাতন হইয়া পড়ে, এই জন্ত অপর কতকগুলি পড়িয়া সত্য সংগ্রহ করিব, কেবল এই চেষ্টাই ছিল। ইহাই উত্তাপের অবস্থা।”

এই যে উত্তাপের অবস্থা, ইহাই কেশব-চরিত্রের সর্বপ্রধান বৈশিষ্ট্য। জ্ঞানবুদ্ধি ও ভক্তিরসের নিয়ত উচ্ছ্বাস, একই জীবনে এই দুয়ের অপূর্ণ দ্বন্দ্ব—ইহাই নবযুগের বাঙ্গালীর নবসৃষ্টি-কামনার অবস্থা: ইহাই এ জাতির প্রতিভার নিদান। ইহা আর্ঘ্যও নয়, সেমিটিকও নয়, ইহা বাঙ্গালীর শোণিত ও বাংলার জল-মাটির বিশিষ্ট গুণ। ইহারই বলে আমরা নব যুগের নূতন কাল্চার সৃষ্টি করিয়াছি—রাষ্ট্রে, সমাজে ও সাহিত্যে, বিষম আদর্শের মিলন ঘটাইয়া, সমগ্র ভারতের ইতিহাসে নূতন অধ্যায় যোজনা করিয়াছি। কেশবচন্দ্রে সেই রুষ্টি-শীতলতাব এক অপূর্ণ বিকাশ লক্ষিত হয়। ভাবুকতাগ্রবণ বাঙ্গালীর



নিকটে কোনও ভাব-সত্যই বর্জ্যনীয় নহে। বাঙ্গালীর নবজাগ্রত উচ্ছৃঙ্খল আবেগ কেশবের সত্যপিপাসা ও বলিষ্ঠ ধর্মচেতনায় সংহত ও সংযত হইয়া জাতীয় জাগরণের একটা দিক নির্ণয় করিয়া দিল। আমার মনে হয় কেশব-চরিত্রের এই দিকটি বাঙ্গালী জাতির নব-জাগৃতির ইতিহাসে বিশেষ করিয়া অনুধাবনযোগ্য।

আমার বক্তব্য শেষ হইয়া আসিয়াছে, তথাপি উপসংহারে আরও কয়েকটি কথা বলিব। সমগ্র ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দী ধরিয়া বাঙ্গালী আর কোনও চিন্তা করে নাই—নূতন যুগের নূতন অবস্থার সঙ্গে, নৈতিক, মানসিক, সামাজিক ও রাষ্ট্রীয় সামঞ্জস্য সাধনই, তাহার সকল কর্ম-চিন্তা, সকল ভাবুকতার মূলে ছিল। জাতির অপঃপতনও যেমন গভীর, পরিভ্রাণের আদর্শও তেমন উচ্চ। ঊনবিংশ শতাব্দীর প্রথম পাদে রামমোহনের মনীষা সেই সমস্তকে প্রথম প্রত্যক্ষ করিয়াছিল, ইহাই রামমোহনের কৃতিত্ব। কিন্তু আমাদের বুদ্ধির জড়তা প্রদর্শন, যুক্তিবিচারের প্রয়োজনীয়তা প্রতিপাদন ছাড়া তিনি অধিক কিছু করিতে পারেন নাই। কেবল যুক্তিবিচারসিদ্ধ মতবাদের দ্বারা ই একটা জাতির হৃদয় বা চরিত্রের পরিবর্তন হয় না—চাই প্রেম, চাই তপশ্চা; জীবনে তাহারই অগ্নি প্রজ্জ্বলিত করিয়া সেই আলোক মানুষের প্রাণে ও মনে বিকীর্ণ করা। কেশব দ্বিতীয় যুগের হৃগন্ধর; তিনি নবজীবন সৃষ্টির কাজে আত্মোৎসর্গ করিয়াছিলেন; তিনি যুগের প্রথম প্রেমিক। কিন্তু কেশবের প্রেমও জাতীয় জীবন-যজ্ঞে পূর্ণা-হতির সিদ্ধিলাভ করিল না। ধর্ম-প্রচারক কেশবচন্দ্রের মঙ্গল জাতীয় জাগরণের প্রথম প্রহরেই নিস্তেজ হইয়া পড়িল। কেশব নিজেও শেষে সকল বিধি, সকল বিধান উত্তীর্ণ হইয়া, নিজের প্রচার-ধর্ম ও

ধর্ম-প্রচারেরও বহু উর্দ্ধে প্রয়াণ করিয়াছিলেন। তথাপি ইহা স্বীকার করিতে হইবে, জাতীয় জীবনযজ্ঞে প্রথম অগ্ন্যাধ্যান করিয়াছিলেন কেশব। তাঁহার প্রচার-কর্মের অপূর্ব উন্মাদনা, নূতন ভাবচিন্তাকে বাহিরের আচার-অনুষ্ঠানে রূপ দিবার আশ্চর্য্য সৃজনীশক্তি, এবং সর্বোপরি তাঁহার ব্যক্তিত্ব—কেশব-বিরোধী সম্প্রদায়কেও অনুপ্রাণিত করিয়াছে; তাঁহার কর্মপদ্ধতি কত কর্মীকে পথ দেখাইয়াছে। সে যুগের যে বাঙ্গালী কবি মহাকাব্য রচনা করিয়া যশস্বী হইয়াছিলেন, আমার মনে হয় তিনিও কেশবীর ভাবের ভাবুক। “এক ধর্ম, এক জাতি, এক ভগবান” এই মহাকাব্য প্রচারকল্পে যিনি, নূতন করিয়া বাঙ্গালীর জগৎ মহাকাব্য রচনা করিতে প্রবৃত্ত হইয়াছিলেন—সেই কবি নবীনচন্দ্রও কেশবের বাণী চাইতেই প্রেরণা লাভ করিয়াছিলেন বলিয়া মনে হয়। আরও মনে হয়, কেশবের অব্যবহিত পরবর্ত্তী কালে যে আব এক মহাপুরুষ এই জাতির জীবন-যজ্ঞে শেষ আছতি দিয়াছিলেন, সেই বীর-সন্ন্যাসী স্বামী বিবেকানন্দও, তাঁহার প্রচার-প্রণালী ও কর্মপদ্ধতিতে কেশবের দ্বারা প্রভাবিত হইয়াছিলেন; যে অগ্নিমজ্জে দীক্ষার কথা কেশব তাঁহার জীবন-বেদে উল্লেখ করিয়াছেন, তাবের সেই উৎসাহ, কর্মোন্মাদনার সেই উত্তাপ বিবেকানন্দের জীবনেও অপরিমিত। বিবেকানন্দ কেশবের পরবর্ত্তী হইলেও অনুবর্ত্তী নহেন, তাঁহার গুরুমন্ত্র ও তাঁহার বাণী স্বতন্ত্র; কিন্তু তাঁহার কর্ম-জীবনের আদর্শে কেশবের ছায়া কতকটা সংক্রামিত হওয়া অসম্ভব নহে।

## মহর্ষি ব্রহ্মানন্দ সংবাদ

(তত্ত্ববোধিনী পত্রিকা—বৈশাখ, ১৮৫৫ শকাব্দ)

[ব্রহ্মানন্দ কেশবচন্দ্র সেন ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে যোগদানের প্রথমভাগে যখন রোগে শয্যাগত হইয়াছিলেন, সেই সময়ে মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ তাঁহাকে যে দুইখানি পত্র লিখিয়াছিলেন, তাহা এবং অপর একখানি আমরা নিম্নে প্রকাশ করিলাম। ব্রহ্মানন্দের প্রতি মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথের যে কিরূপ সম্প্রীতি ও গভীর অনুরাগ ছিল, নিম্ন প্রকাশিত দুইখানি পত্রে উহার পরিচয় সম্যক প্রকাশ পাইবে।\* ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের ইতিহাসে উভয়ের মধ্যে এই অনুরাগ একটি আশ্চর্য্য ঘটনা। তাই আমরা উহা প্রকাশ করিয়া ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজকে নিবেদন করিলাম। প্রকাশিত তিনখানি পত্রই সম্ভবতঃ কেশবচন্দ্রের ব্রহ্মানন্দ উপাধিলাভের পবেই লিখিত হইয়াছিল। তং সং]

\* ইহার মধ্যে দুইখানি এখানে দেওয়া হইল। ইহা পাঠ করিলে স্পষ্টই প্রকাশ পাইবে যে শ্রীযুৎ ভবসিদ্ধ দত্ত তাঁহার প্রণীত মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঠাকুরের জীবনীতে, কেশবচন্দ্রকে লোক চক্ষে হীন করিবার জন্তই দুই এক স্থলে যে আজগোবী গল্প কথার অবতারণা করিয়াছেন তাহা সর্ব্বৈব ভিত্তিবিহীন। কেশবচন্দ্র সদলে যে জন্তু কলিকাতা (আদি) ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ ত্যাগ করিতে বাধ্য হ'ন তাহা সকলে বিদিত আছেন এবং তাহা নানাস্থানে লিপিবদ্ধও আছে। সে বিষয়ে কোন দ্বন্দ্বই নাই। এস্থলে একটি অলীক গল্পের অবতারণা সত্যের প্রতি অশ্রদ্ধার ও মনের মলিনতার পরিচায়ক।

প্রাণাধিক কেশবচন্দ্র—

তোমার ওরা শ্রাবণের পত্র গত কল্যা পাইয়া অতিশয় ব্যাকুলিত হইলাম। অষ্টাপি তোমার পীড়ার শাস্তি হইল না, আর ইহারই মধ্যে তুমি এই বাটী ভাড়া করিয়া থাকিতে বাধিত হইতেছে। ইহা ব্যতীত যখন আর কোন সন্মুখ উপলব্ধি হইতেছে না, তখন আমার আর ইহাতে কথা নাই। এখন আমার মনের সঙ্কট অসুস্থান করিবাব তোমার সময় নহে। \*

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প্রাণাধিক কেশবচন্দ্র ব্রজানন্দ সমীপেষু—

তোমার ১০ই ভাদ্রের পত্র পাইয়া অতীব বিয়ম ও ব্যাকুল হইলাম। “যে ক্ষুদ্র গৃহে পরিবার অবস্থিতি করিতে দেবেন, সেই গৃহে গত শুক্রবারে আসিয়াছি” এই পংক্তি আমার হৃদয়ে যেন বজ্রাঘাততুল্য বোধ হইল। আমি কখনো মনে করি নাই যে, তুমি এই তোমার রুগ্ন শরীর লইয়া সেই গৃহে প্রবেশ করিবে। তুমি সহজে যে একেবারে স্বীকার করিলে, তাহা শুনিয়া আমাদের হৃদয় বিদীর্ণ হয়। তোমার জন্তে এষ্ট কলিকাতায় এমন গৃহ আর পাওয়া গেল না,

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\* ইহার অবশিষ্টাংশ আর পাই নাই। শ্রীক্ষি,

যেখানে তুমি স্নান মনে বায়ু সেবন.....‡ এবং প্রশস্ত মনে সপরি-  
 বারে থাকিতে পার। তোমার এ দুর্বল শরীর লইয়া সে ক্ষুদ্র  
 গৃহে যাওয়া কদাপি যুক্তিসিদ্ধ হয় নাই। তুমি মনে করিলে ইহা  
 হইতে উত্তম গৃহে যাইতে পারিবে। তোমার শরীরের উপর এমন  
 অবস্থা দেখিয়া আমি নিতান্ত অবসন্ন হইয়াছি। আমি.....আর  
 আমার.....বাটা অব্যাহত.....। আমি তোমার কোন কার্যে  
 আইলাম না; এই পীড়ার সময়ে তোমার থাকিবার জগ্রে একটি  
 উপযুক্ত গৃহ দিতে পারিলাম না। তুমি যাতে মনের শাস্তিতে এবং  
 শরীরের আরামে থাকিতে পার সেই উপায়ই অবলম্বন করিবে। এজগৎ  
 তোমার প্রতি আমার নিতান্ত অনুরোধ। একথা আমার এখনো  
 অত্যাক্তি নয় যে, তোমার মঙ্গল ও সুখের সঙ্গে আমার মঙ্গল ও  
 সুখ অবিচ্ছিন্ন হইয়া গিয়াছে; তুমি আপনার অন্তর দেখিলেই আমার  
 একথা সার দিবে তাহাতে সন্দেহ নাই। কিন্তু যদিও বর্তমান  
 অবস্থাতে বাটা গড়া করিবার.....নাই, সকল অপেক্ষা উত্তম কল্প  
 স্থির হয়, তথাপি আমার এই কথাটি রক্ষা করিবে। যে পর্যন্ত  
 তোমার আরোগ্যলাভ না হয়, সে পর্যন্ত সেই গৃহ-নির্বাচনভাব  
 সম্পূর্ণরূপে আপনার উপরে লইবে না। যে সামগ্রীর প্রয়োজন হয়,  
 কৈলাস মুখোপাধ্যায়কে \* তাহার আদেশ করিবে। সে থাকিয়া  
 সকল ব্যবস্থা করিয়া দিবে। পীড়ার সময়ে নূতন গৃহকার্যের ভার  
 লইয়া ব্যস্তসমস্ত হইবে না।

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‡ এই চিহ্নিত স্থানগুলির হস্তাক্ষর বৃদ্ধিতে পারা যায় নাই।  
 তং সং

\* মহর্ষি দেবেন্দ্রনাথের খাজাঞ্চি

আমরা পূর্বদিন যে তোমার আরোগ্য দেখিয়া আমরা সকলে উৎসাহপূর্বক তোমাকে নূতন গৃহ-প্রবেশ করাইতাম তাহা হইল না। এই কাল আমাদের প্রতিকূল হয়েছে। সেই ঈশ্বর যেমন আমাদের পূর্বেও অনুকূল এখনও অনুকূল। তিনি অবশ্য সকল অবস্থা ও সকল ঘটনার মধ্যে মঙ্গলেরই বিধান করিবেন। তুমি অসহ শারীরিক ও মানসিক ক্রেশে যেরূপ সহিষ্ণুতা ও দৃঢ়তা অভ্যাস করিয়াছ, ইহাতে ঈশ্বরপ্রসাদে ধর্মযুদ্ধে তুমি অবির্ভায় সেনাপতি হইবে। যেন এই ঘোর বিপত্তিকালে তোমার জীবনসহায় তোমার সহায় হউন; তোমার হৃদয়ে আলোক ও ধৈর্য্য প্রেরণ করিয়া সংসার-মঙ্কট হইতে রক্ষা করুন। তিনি তোমার ঔষধ, তিনি তোমার বল, তিনি তোমার আনন্দ হউন, তিনি তোমাকে রক্ষা করুন।

হৃদীয় শুভানুধ্যায়িনঃ

(স্বাঃ) শ্রীদেবেন্দ্রনাথ ঞ্মর্গণঃ

পুঃ—

তুমি লিখিয়াছ যে, শীঘ্র বিসয় হস্তান্তরিত না হইলে আরো অনিষ্ট হইবার সম্ভব, এখন চইতেই অনিষ্ট চইতে আরম্ভ করিয়াছে। তুমি আমার মত বেশ না শুনে তুমি আপনাকে, আমাকে, তোমার পরিবারকে রুখা কষ্ট দিতেছ। আমার টাকা থাকিতে তোমার টাকার অভাব নাই। যাবৎ তোমার বিষয় হস্তান্তরিত না হয়, তাবৎ তোমার নির্দারের জন্ত যত টাকা প্রয়োজন হইবে, তাহা

কৈলাস মুখোপাধ্যায়কে বলিয়া পাঠাইবে, টাকা আপনার মতন স্বীকার করিবে।

সেই বৈশাখের উৎসবে তোমাতে আমার মন যেমন প্রীত হইয়াছিল ২১এ ভাদ্র তোমার পত্র পাইয়া তেমনি ক্লেশ অনুভব করিয়াছি। তোমার অপেক্ষাকৃত শাস্তি লাভ হইয়াছে—এইজ্ঞা বিষয়ের পাড়তার হ্রাস নাই; কিন্তু এক্ষণেই ইহাতে আমি তোমার সম্বিবেচনার প্রশংসা করিলাম না।

## শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ ও শ্রীকেশব

ব্রাহ্মধর্মের নববিধানমতের প্রবর্তক কেশবচন্দ্রের প্রতি তাঁহার (শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণের) অনুরাগ ও শ্রদ্ধা ছিল গীমাহীন। কেশবচন্দ্রের সহিত শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণের সাক্ষাতের কাহিনী অপরূপ !



কেশবচন্দ্র শিক্ষিত ব্রাহ্ম—শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ সনাতনধর্মী ; অথচ কেশবচন্দ্র কি পাইয়াছিলেন শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণের মধ্যে ? কেশবচন্দ্র তাঁহার মধ্যে প্রত্যক্ষ করিয়াছিলেন সত্য। তিনি জানিয়াছিলেন,—এই সরল ব্রাহ্মণ ভগবানকে পাইয়াছেন মনে প্রাণে—a Man who lived and moved with God,—a Saint whose thoughts and speech were profoundly original and arresting. তাঁহার প্রতি কেশবচন্দ্রের শ্রদ্ধা ছিল এতখানি যে, শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণের বহু বাণী গ্রন্থকারে তিনি প্রকাশিত করিয়া যান।

উদার কেশবচন্দ্র দল গড়িতে নামেন নাট—সত্যের তিনি সন্ধানী ছিলেন। আপনাকে উচ্চ মঞ্চে চড়াইয়া ভক্তি আদায়ের ব্যবস্থা জানিতেন না ! শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণদেবের প্রতি তাঁহার শ্রদ্ধা ভক্তি তাঁহার অন্তরের স্ফুটতাই সপ্রমাণ করে।



শ্রীবানকৃষ্ণও কেশবচক্রে গৃহে আসিয়াছিলেন। বহু বাক্ষ প্রচারক সে সময়ে সে গৃহে উপস্থিত ছিলেন। শ্রীরামকৃষ্ণ একবার সে গৃহে আসিয়া সদর দ্বারে ভক্তিভরে শির স্পর্শ করেন। একপ করার কি তাৎপর্য—একজন জিজ্ঞাসা করিলে তদুত্তরে তিনি বলিলেন, “আমি কেশবের জননীকে প্রণাম করিতেছি। শ্রীভগবান্ যখন নৃসিংহ বেশে হিরণ্যকশিপুর দেহ বিদীর্ণ করেন, তখন তার ছিন্ন শিরা প্রভৃতি দ্বারা নিজের দেহ বেষ্ঠন করিয়াছিলেন। এই শরীরাংশেই প্রহ্লাদের জন্ম—তাই সে শরীরের এমন মাহাত্ম্য! কেশবকে দেখিবার পূর্বে তাই কেশবের আধারস্বরূপিণী তাহার জননীকে প্রণতি জানাইতেছি।”

(১৩৪০ সালে ৬ই দাঙ্কনের, “দৈনিক বঙ্গমতী”)

সাক্ষরগ ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের প্রবীণ সভ্য ও “নব্য ভারতের”  
সম্পাদক স্বর্গীয় দেবীপ্রসন্ন রায়-চৌধুরী প্রণীত “দোণ্ডি”  
নামক গ্রন্থের “সেকালের এবং একালের ব্রাহ্ম”  
প্রবন্ধ ইহাতে উদ্ধৃত—(উক্ত গ্রন্থের ৭৮—৮১ পৃষ্ঠা)

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মহাত্মা রাজা রামমোহন রায়ের মূলমন্ত্র ছিল, উদারতা এবং ধর্ম-নিরপেক্ষতা। এই উদারতা এবং ধর্ম-নিরপেক্ষতার গুণে এ দেশে অমৃত ফল ফলিয়াছিল। দেবেন্দ্রনাথ, রামতনু, রাজনারায়ণ, সেই উদারতা এবং নিরপেক্ষতার ফল। এই সকল মহাজনেরা কি করিয়াছেন, কি দেখাইয়াছেন অল্পাধিক পরিমাণে অনেকেই জানেন, স্মরণ্য বিবৃতির প্রয়োজন নাই। ইহাদের সংস্পর্শে এবং চরিত্র ছায়ায় মহাত্মা কেশবচন্দ্রের উদয়। কেশবচন্দ্রের উদয় এবং ব্রাহ্ম-ধর্মের চরমোন্নতি, একই কথা। তাঁহার জীবন এবং সকল ধর্ম সম্বন্ধে একই কথা। তিনি বিশ্বজনীন উদারতা এবং স্বাধীনতার মহাসম্মিলন সংঘটন করিয়া যে দৃষ্টান্ত রাখিয়া গিয়াছেন, তাহা বুঝিতে বহু যুগ লাগিবে। তাঁর জীবনদর্শে কলিকাতার প্রতাপচন্দ্র, গৌরগোবিন্দ, ত্রৈলোক্যনাথ, উমেশচন্দ্র, শিবনাথ প্রভৃতি এবং মফঃস্বলের আরো অনেক মহাজন-দিগের অভ্যুদয় হয়। শেষে কি কৃষ্ণে এবং কি অলক্ষণে যে দিব্য পোকা ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে প্রবেশ করিল, তাহাতে শরীর রোমাঙ্কিত হয়। ১ শিবনাথ এবং আনন্দমোহন উদারতার ধর্ম্মাধিপত্যের নির্ভাসিকা

দেখিয়া, স্বাধীনতা, বনান স্বৈচ্ছাচারিতার নিশান হস্তে লইয়া কলিকাতার রাস্তায় অবতরণ করিলেন। কুচবিহার বিবাহ অনুকূল হইল—প্রতিবাদ ও আন্দোলন উঠিল। প্রতিবাদ ও আন্দোলনের অর্থ অবাধ পরিনিন্দা। চতুর্দিকে বিঘোষিত হইল, বড় ছোট, জ্ঞানী মূর্থ, ভক্ত অভক্ত সবাই সমান, সকলেরই এক ভোট। গোটবাদিগণ দলে দলে জুটিলেন। স্বাধীনতার নামে স্বৈচ্ছাচারিতার অসংযত ও উশৃঙ্খল সমালোচনা প্রবাহ বহিতে লাগিল। কখন দেখি, কেহ “মূলত সমাচারকে” পদ দ্বারা মর্দন করিতেছেন, কখন দেখি, কেহ কেশববাবুর নাম মুক্তিকায় অঙ্কিত করিয়া পাছকা দ্বারা আত্মপর্দা সহকারে মর্দন করিতেছেন! সে সকল ঘণিত কথার উল্লেখ করিতেও ছুঃখে হৃদয় অবসন্ন হয়। এই রূপে মহাজন নিন্দার গরল উঠিল। বুনি বা সেই পাপের ফলে এখন ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ ভুগিতেছেন।

ক্রমে সাধারণ ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ প্রতিষ্ঠিত হইল, উপাসনার প্রকাণ্ড মন্দির উঠিল। ইহার ঝুঁকিডিতে লিখা আছে, কোন ব্যক্তি বা কোন ধর্মের নিন্দা এই মন্দিরে হইবে না। কিন্তু স্বকর্ণে শুনিয়াছি, এই মন্দিরে বিজয়কৃষ্ণ (১) আনন্দ করতালি তুলিয়া কেশবচন্দ্রের নিন্দা ঘোষণা করিয়াছেন। রামকুমারের (২) সহিত এই সময়ে কয়েকবার মফঃস্বলে ভ্রমণ করিয়াছিলাম, তখন দেখিয়াছি, তাঁহার মুখে অল্প কথানাই, কেবল কেশববাবুদের নিন্দা। প্রতিদিন একজন্ম বহুবার

(১) স্বর্গীয় বিজয়কৃষ্ণ গোস্বামী মহাশয় (জটীয়াবাবা) সাধারণ ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের তখনকার প্রধান প্রচারক ছিলেন।

(২) স্বর্গীয় রামকুমার বিদ্যারত্ন, সাধারণ ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজের অন্যতম প্রচারক।

তাঁহার সহিত বিবাদ করিতাম। মাতবৎসর পরে তিনি স্বীকার করিয়াছেন, নিন্দা করিয়া অপকর্ম করিয়াছিলেন। নিন্দা-পাপের প্রায়শ্চিত্ত করিবার জ্ঞাত কি না, কে জানে, নিজস্বকৃষ্ণ এবং রামকুমার ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ পরিত্যাগ করিয়া নব নব সাধন-পথ আবিষ্কার করিয়া দল বাঁধিয়াছেন। নিন্দা যখন মানুষের মূলমন্ত্র হয়, হিংসা এবং ক্রোধ তাহার আশ্রয় লয়। প্রতিহিংসা এবং ক্রোধ ক্রমে ক্রমে ব্রাহ্ম হৃদয়ে এমন বদ্ধ মূল হইতে লাগিল যে, ধর্ম, উদারতা, দীর্ঘতা, সহিষ্ণুতা, পুণ্য, পবিত্রতা, সংসাহস ক্রমে ক্রমে পলায়ন করিতে লাগিল। এ কথা যখন পত্রিকায় ঘোষিত হইতে লাগিল, তখন লাইবেল (Libel Case) কর, এই মূল মন্ত্র উঠিল। আমি লিখিব কি, লজ্জায় মরিয়া যাই, নিন্দা গরল পান করিয়া যে সকল মহাজনদিগের অভ্যুদয় হইতেছে, তাঁহাদেরই অনেকেরই না আছে চরিত্র, না আছে ধর্ম, না আছে সংসাহস, না আছে পুণ্যের জোর! তবে আছে কি? ভীকতা, কাপুক্যতা, পাপস্পৃহা, অহঙ্কার, হিংসা, নিদ্রা, বিলাসিতা, প্রতারণা, প্রবঞ্চনা, আত্মতুরিতা এবং অবশিষ্ট অশেষ গুণরাশি। এক সময় এমন ছিল, যখন এদেশের লোকেরা ব্রাহ্মের নাম শুনিলেই শ্রদ্ধা করিত, আর এখন? এখন ব্রাহ্ম নাম শুনিলেই সকলে কর্ণে অঙ্গুলি দেয়। ইহার কারণ কি? কারণ কি কিছুই নাই? ব্রাহ্ম বলিলেই এখন অনেকে বুঝেন, যে ব্যক্তি ধর্মের পোষাক পরিয়া প্রতারণা করিতে পারে, যে ব্যক্তি অন্ধের নিন্দা দ্বারা নিজের সহস্র দোষ ঢাকিতে পারে, সেই ব্রাহ্ম। কি দুঃখের কথা। মহাত্মাদিগের মহত্ব স্বরণ ও চিন্তনে মানুষের মহত্বের উদয় হয়। নিন্দা-কীর্ত্তনে আত্মা কলুষিত হয়,

চরিত্র নবিত হয়। নিন্দা-বিসপানে ব্রাহ্ম সাধারণের কি অপকার করিয়াছে, যাঁহারা চিন্তাশীল, তাঁহারা বুঝিতে পারিবেন।

প্রতি ব্যক্তিই সমান, বড় ছোট, জ্ঞানী মূর্থ, সাধক অসাধক, ভক্ত অভক্ত, সকলেই সমান, সকলেরই এক ভোট! স্বাধীনতার এমন বিশাদ ব্যাখ্যা কেহ কখনও শুনিয়াছে কি? স্বাধীনতার মহাকেন্দ্র ইংলণ্ডেও রুতী ও পণ্ডিত লোকের আদর, বৃদ্ধ ও বুদ্ধিমানের আদর সর্বাপেক্ষা অধিক; আর এখানে সবাই সমান! চরিত্রবান্ শিবনাথ আর অগঠিতচরিত্র আমি সমান! তাঁহারাও এক ভোট, আমারও এক ভোট! ত্রিংশ-বৎসর-ব্যাপী সাধনার ফলে যে উমেশচন্দ্রের অভ্যুদয় হইয়াছে তাঁহাকে অষ্টাদশ-বর্ষ-বয়স্ক নবীন-যুবক-ব্রাহ্ম গোট-সমতায় আজ অনায়াসেই উড়াইয়া দিতেছে! দিতেছে, দিক। ফল হইতেছে কি? কেমন ব্রাহ্ম সকল উৎপন্ন হইতেছেন? কেমন প্রচারক সকল দেখা দিতেছেন? লিখিব কি, যেন চরিত্র-হীনতার মহামেলা মিলিয়াছে। সয়তানে সয়তানে কোলাকুলি হইতেছে, চরিত্রহীনে চরিত্রহীনে মিলন হইতেছে, তারপর একদল অত্যাচারের বাপাস্ত করিয়া মহাকীর্তি প্রতিষ্ঠিত করিতেছেন! ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে কোন সংকাজ যে না হইতেছে এমন নহে, সংকাজের তুলনায় অসংকাজের বোঝাই গুরুতর হইয়া উঠিতেছে; বগড়া এবং বিবাদ, অন্তর্কলহে সমাজ ডুবিতেছে। পূর্বে বিনয় ছিল ব্রাহ্মের প্রধান লক্ষণ, এখন বিলাস তৎস্থান অধিকার করিয়াছে। পূর্বে অমায়িকতা ও মধুরতা ছিল ব্রাহ্মের অঙ্গের ভূষণ, এখন আত্মসন্ত্রস্ততা এবং অহং-সর্বস্বতাব সে স্থান অধিকার করিয়াছে। পূর্বে বিশ্বাস এবং ভক্তি ছিল ব্রাহ্মের একমাত্র অন্ন জল, এখন সম্মান, কুল-গৌরব, টাকা ও

পদ-মর্যাদা সে স্থান গ্রহণ করিয়াছে। পূর্বে সেবা, চরিত্র, অনুরাগ, প্রেম, সত্য ও জ্ঞানপিপাসা ব্রাহ্মের বিশেষত্ব ছিল, এখন প্রশংসাপিপাসা হিংসা ও স্বার্থ সকল সৎ গুণের স্থান অধিকার করিতেছে। পূর্বে অস্ত্রের মহত্ব স্মরণ এবং চিন্তন ব্রাহ্ম-জীবনের মহত্ব লাভের একমাত্র অবলম্বন ছিল, সেই স্থলে এখন পর-নিন্দা, পর-চর্চা শোভা পাইতেছে। আর সর্বোপরি অমুদারতা সংক্রামক ব্যাধির ভ্রায় ঘরে ঘরে বিচরণ করিতেছে। পৃথিবীর আর সকলেই নগণ্য, সকলেই পতিত, সকলেই চরিত্রহীন, কেবল এ ধরায় ব্রাহ্মই একমাত্র মোক্ষের অধিকারী! এইরূপ অহঙ্কার ছোট বড় সকলকে আক্রমণ করিয়া সর্বনাশ করিতেছে। তুমি হিন্দু, তোমার ছায়া মাড়াইলে ব্রাহ্মের পতন হয়, কেন না, তোমার রুচিবোধ নাই, তুমি পৌত্তলিক। তুমি খৃষ্টান, তোমার ধারে বসিলেও ব্রাহ্মের অকল্যাণ হয়, কেন না তুমি উপধর্ম মানিয়া চল। হায়, হায়, হায়, এইরূপ করিয়া অহঙ্কার ব্রাহ্ম-শিশুদিগকে বধ করিতেছে। আমি শতমুখে বলিব, অহঙ্কার ও সাম্প্রদায়িকতা শিক্ষার মূল বিদ্যালয় ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ। ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজে নিম্নকের আদর সর্বাপেক্ষা বেশী। ব্রাহ্ম-সমাজ এখন নিম্নকের দলে পরিপূর্ণ। নিন্দা-বিষে ব্রাহ্ম-সাধারণ জর্জরিত।

এই সকল কথা ভাবিলে সেকালের এবং, একালের ব্রাহ্মের পার্থক্য বুঝা যায়।



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 The Apostle of Navavidhan who made all the  
 Hindu Shastras in Sanskrit his special study.

*In Sanskrit:*

Bhasyasanjamni  
 Gita samanvaya-bhasya\*  
 Vedantasamanvaya-  
 bhasya\*  
 Gita Prapurti\*

In all these works, the Upa-  
 dhyaya has tried to present  
 the harmonious point of  
 view of Navavidhan in the  
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up-to-date reliable and scholarly biography of  
Keshab Chandra Sen.

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TRIVIDHA JANMA—

VEDANTER APABAD-KHANDAN—

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O Sadhan.

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- (iii) Law giver of Modern India.
- (iv) A plea for study of Keshab.
11. G. C. BANERJI—
- (i) 'KESHAB AS SEEN BY HIS OPPO-  
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Besides the foreword which is a quotation from the Marquis of Zetland's (Earl of Ronaldshay), 'The Heart of Aryavarta,' the book contains a series of confessions in English and Bengali from such eminent Indians as the late Lord Sinha of Raipur, Sir K. G. Gupta, Sir Nilratan Sarkar, Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore, Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal, Principal H. C. Maitra, Dr. V. Rai Pandit Shivanath Shastri and others. Also Pandit S. Shastri's own disciple Chandi Charan Banerji's scathing criticism of Pandit Shastri's "History of the Brahmo Samaj."

- (ii) KESHAB CHANDRA AND RAMKRISHNA.  
Indian Press, Allahabad pp. 402—Nov. 1931.

Presents the true spiritual relation that existed between the two great souls. The book points out the mis-statements and false stories manufactured by interested persons and preached in India, America and elsewhere.

- (iii) BRAHMANANDA KESHABCHANDER SEN.  
—(In memorium) pp. 362 + 130, + xiii (1934).

12. UPENDRA KRISHNA GUPTA, B.A.—

- (iv) MAX MULLER ON RAMKRISHNA AND KESHAB—(Allahabad, 1930, pp. 13). Reprinted from an article "A Real Mahatman and Keshab Chandra Sen," in the 'Interpreter and the Young Man,' November 1896, Calcutta.

13. SAROJ KUMAR DAS, M.A., Ph. D.—Article on Keshab, published in the Navavidhan of January 29, 1931. A short report of the speech delivered on January 8, 1931, at the Keshab Memorial meeting of that year.

14. DWIJADAS DATTA, M.A., A.R.A.C.—

"BEHOLD THE MAN" or Keshab and the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta, pp. 289. A significant confession by one who was for many years identified with the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj (and like Saul of New Testament times who persecuted the followers of Jesus, tried to persecute Keshab and those who followed the way of Navavidhan).

15. B. C. GHOSH, M.A., M.B.—Articles published in the columns of the Navavidhan. These have been reprinted in the form of booklets entitled 'FRAGMENTS' in Exposition of Navavidhan. Very helpful to all students of Keshab and Navavidhan literature.

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# ERRATA.

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Read</i>
5	5	libgt	light
12	4	burnt	brunt
13	18	heir	their
14	10	omit one ' of ' after	" thought "
15	3	families	familias
16	7	iujurious	injurious
18	31	The believe	To believe
19	3	s now tho	is now the
20	21	strifle	stifle
23	12	bared	based
23	18	snch	such
25	27	remarkably	remarkable
25	32	other	others
25	35	He was	He had
26	3	In article	In an article
27	29	system	systems
28	11	field at	field of
28	15	ch erfully	cheerfully
28	22	unk nwn	unknown
28	25	gu de	guide
28	25	speaks.	speaks,
29	21	comes to the	comes to be
30	16	a s already	as already
33	26	tha	that
35	6	hat	that
35	9	Ch itanya's	Chaitanya's
35	17	truely	truly
36	31	iike	like
38	8	heard	hard
38	20	so ial	social
38	21	sen ed	sented
39	2	patriarched	patriarchal
39	8	Bœtian	Bœotian
39	17	exceedingly	exceeding

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Read</i>
39	25	forms	reforms
40	1	missi naries	missionaries
40	13	rahmo	Brahmo
40	20	eminentl	eminently
40	22	hunder	Chunder
40	23	religiens	religious
40	24	rahmo	Brahmo
41	14	tenants	tenets
41	17	conntrymen	countrymen
41	18	huve	have
41	33	cause of	cause and
42	33	souls of	souls in
43	25	ispen-	Dispen-
43	last	truth teaching	truth-teaching
46	18	which	to which
43	5	crubs	cubs
44	22	iife	life
57	7	ought	taught
57	16	Collete	Collett
57	15	Protest	protest against
58	16	behalf on	b-half of
59	25	On for	Oh for
58	4	sad	and
68	9	demon	demon of
68	33	times	time
61	20	arewell	Farewell
61	21	libery	liberty
63	22	p ace	place
64	1	for	forth
67	12	are	is
67	16	try no	try not
67	36	n the	in the
70	18	prepared	be prepared
71	25	ispensation	Dispensation
72	21	nector	nectar
73	1	quarels	quarrels.
73	31	possibility	possible

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Read</i>
75	11	profits	profit
75	20	Navdipa	Navadwipa
75	23	iife	life
76	7	soirie	soiree
79	25	Peurbhyn	Penrhyn
80	19	are	age
82	23	say.	say,
89	5	ideas	idea
91	9	hight	high
91	29	or	of
91	33	ab ut	about
92	7	from	form
93	15	as on	as one
94	18	school-master	school-mates
94	29	cf	of
95	12	<i>Insert after "religious" the following : "activities. I was not connected with the religious "</i>	
96	26	I hopes	I hope
97	1	object	objected
97	24	adorn	adorns
99	7	wen	went
100	12	openiy	openly
101	28	peg-	preg-
102	22	states	state
102	31	with the	with it the
104	9	Cammissioner	Commissioner
106	21	rises	raises
108	22	writing	writings
109	35	give	gives
110	4	spirt	spirit
110	20	prohet	prophet
112	1	gates	grades
118	33	dewager	dcwager
120	27	crucical	crucial
120	36	hold	held
127	25	library	library of

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Read</i>
135	19	taht	that
140	last	nius	genius
142	8	suitibly	suitably
142	8	genius	genesis
142	last	source	the source
143	24	the e	there
144	23	city	Deity
148	18	Presbytarian	Presbyterian
151	6	Dayanda	Dayananda
151	22	old age	age old
156	9	Sens's	Sen's
156	19	of nation	of a nation.
159	2	initiative	intuitive
159	15	miserale	miserable
161	20	down	drawn
161	23	preserve	persevere
162	27	law if	law and
164	24	prisoners	pioneers
164	25	hody	body
173	13	regnum	regnum
175	21	dethrone	dethroned
178	15	sufficient	sufficient
179	16	purrified	purified
179	25	teaeching	teaching
180	35	will not	will is not
182	16	lighteth	lighteth
183	30	your	yours
185	10	Persee	Parsee
189	11	thrive	thrives
189	16	brisk's	briskness
189	16	quite	quiet
189	24	stain	strain
190	8	<i>delete</i> fullstop after "scenes"	
190	22	lark	lank
190	29	editor	edition
190	last	flrst	first
191	31	kinner	kinder

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Read</i>
192	5	<del>delete</del> one " much "	
192	20	sap	say
192	32	alone	alone is
194	1	thought	thought
194	14	gretest	greatest
195	33	Sabha	Shabda
197	34	voioe	voice
198	9	vsliion	vision
198	16	graet	great
201	1	yearnning	yearning
203	10	of great	of a great
203	20	atssurance	assurance
205	3	wsa	was
209	28	proselitizing	proselytizing
209	31	such the	such was the
211	16	influnc	influence
212	2	inteilectud	intellectual
212	16	reverred	revered
212	19	experience	experiences
212	23	one Ihigh	on Ihigh
213	30	retained	remained
219	26	they	thy
225	26	centre	entire
229	22	s udying	studying
236	17	<del>omit</del> "and"	
238	17	pnblc	public
238	17	peaiod	period
241	32	form	from
242	32	designate	designates
246	16	Devoutedly	Devotedly
246	17	SHRMA	SHARMA
247	7	contract	contact
250	24	throught	thought
253	9	unrembered	unnumbered
253	33	absoluteiy	absolutely
254	18	similary	similarly
256	15	was which	which was

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Read</i>
256	28	Brahman of	Brahman or
257	12	brought	brought
261	5	a para	apara
262	1	profundly	profoundly
264	16	alumine	alumni
267	19, 22, 26	institutions	intuitions
267	28	instituti n	intution
269	7	later's	latter's
270	29	himself and	himself heart and
272	13	founded	found
273	18	revelations	revelation
279	19	of Society	of the Society
281	30	parfect	perfect
281	30	this	this
293	30	Govinde	Govinda
294	33	Leading	leading
296	36	Mahondra	Mahendra
302	5	execused	excused
302	17	Reed	Reid
302	26	phisophical	philosophical
307	14	<del>delete</del> "he"	
309	1	VI	IV
309	10	become	became
309	14	much to	much too
309	17	Keshab was	Eight years b
		eight years	fore Keshut
		old when	birth
310	2	elders	others
310	19	Tattava-bodhhi	Tattva-bodhir
310	36	Theodore	Theodcre
310	36	Cobb	Cobbe
311	36	samll	small
320	28	<del>delete</del> fullstop after "latter"	
327	1	vionelt	violent
327	8	sbusequent	subsequent
328	4	Puaranic	Pauranic

<i>Page</i>	<i>Line</i>	<i>For</i>	<i>Read</i>
333	6	harmonie	harmonize
337	11	no life	no he
338	last	believe	believe he
338	"	Hindu	Hindu
339	2	movements	movement
339	4	truth	truth
340	23	message	message
341	31	teachings	teachings
341	32	fruit	fruit
342	8	af	of
344	34	taht	that
347	10	npon	upon
347	18	hin	him
347	21	chuch	church
347	27	than	that
349	15	meau	mean
350	last	which	which
353	<i>delete the first line</i>		
353	13	I shal	I shall
356	1	Alviella's	D Alviella's
356	19	Janbilicus	Jamblicus
361	21	Counter	Comte
361	4	God-will	good-will

२	८	शुं शुं	शुं
७	२१	{शुं शुं शुं}	{शुं शुं शुं}





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